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On Top Of The News Email:news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:+297 582-7800 Thursday, December 12, 2013

## TIME'S PERSON OF THE YEAR IS POPE FRANCIS



Pope Francis, Time magazine's 2013 Person of the Year, in a photo of the magazine cover provided by Time, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013.

(AP Photo)

DAVID BAUDER

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Time magazine selected Pope Francis as its Person of the Year on Wednesday, saying the Catholic Church's new leader has changed the perception of the 2,000-year-old institution in an extraordinary way.

The pope beat out NSA leaker Edward Snowden for the distinction, which the newsmagazine has been giving each year since 1927.

The former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected in March as the first pope from Latin America and the first Jesuit. Since taking over at the Vatican, he has urged the Catholic Church not to be obsessed with "small-minded rules."

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## Changing Alliances



## Republicans Voice Support For Budget Pact

House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, left, joined by House Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., takes reporters' questions, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013, as House Republicans signaled support for a budget deal worked out this week.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

STEVEN R. HURST

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Congressional negotiators set to work Wednesday trying to sell a compromise budget plan to conservatives

who are upset by continued deficit spending and liberals who want an extension of unemployment benefits for long-term jobless Americans. President Barack Obama called the

agreement a good first step, one that would prevent another government shutdown early next year. The path to the bipartisan deal was greased by falling poll numbers for both Dem-

ocrats, who control the Senate, and Republicans, who control the House of Representatives.

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# Throngs vie for a last look at Mandela

Alan Cowell

© 2013 New York Times

PRETORIA, South Africa - With hundreds of dignitaries and thousands of ordinary South Africans filing past, the body of Nelson Mandela was lying in state Wednesday below the sweeping facade of the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the seat of official power where he was sworn in 19

dabbed at their eyes with white handkerchiefs. President Robert G. Mugabe of Zimbabwe bowed as he passed the coffin and the white-uniformed guards, all four of them junior naval officers, at each end of it. Many of those viewing the body - such as F.W. de Klerk, the country's last white president, with whom Mandela shared the 1993 No-

was not on point at all." She was part of a group that had been waiting from early in the morning and marched back and forth before being told to join the back of a queue of people waiting for a bus. At another designated assembly point, in the Pretoria showground, pandemonium broke out as thousands queued and tried to shove

formed up as the coffin arrived under bright skies - a marked contrast with the rain that drenched Tuesday's ceremony in Soweto. Mandla Mandela, Mandela's eldest grandson, led family mourners as a military band played the national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika," or "God Bless Africa."

The coffin is to be trans-



**Military officers carry the coffin of former South African President Nelson Mandela to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa, Dec. 11, 2013. Mandela's remains will lie in state for three days at the Union Buildings where he took the oath of office 19 years ago as the country's first black president.**

(Marco Longari/The New York Times)

years ago as South Africa's first black president. With his head and shoulders visible under a glass cover, and his body dressed in a brown shirt, his face - unmistakable to many around the world since his release from prison in 1990 after 27 years of incarceration - seemed serene.

A day after tens of thousands of South Africans joined world leaders, including President Barack Obama, at a sometimes rambunctious national memorial ceremony for Mandela in Soweto, the mood was more muted.

President Jacob G. Zuma was among the first mourners to view the coffin along with family members, including Mandela's widow, Graça Machel, and his former wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who

bel peace prize, and former President Thabo Mbeki - had been on the podium during Tuesday's memorial in Soweto. Live television coverage showed celebrities like Bono filing past. As the procession unfolded, temperatures soared in the South African summer.

The sheer number of South Africans hoping to catch a glimpse of the body appeared to have overwhelmed authorities with thousands lined up at screening sites around the city to board buses to the Union Buildings. At the University of Pretoria sports facilities, a single white tent the size of a cottage was intended to service a line that wound for hundreds of yards around the campus. "You can't have one small tent to treat all the people," said Thabi Taukobong, 21. "Their planning

their way past police. By mid-afternoon, authorities announced that the effort to transport mourners to view the body had reached full capacity for the day and that people arriving at the assembly points would be turned away until Thursday. Those who did reach the Union Buildings filed past the body at a brisk pace.

Mandela's body is to lie in state for three days before his funeral Sunday, the latest solemn moment in the nation's mourning for its former president and towering moral authority. Mandela died Thursday at age 95. At the ceremony Tuesday, he was celebrated by Obama as the last great liberator of the 20th century.

On the esplanade of the pale stone Union Buildings, a military honor guard

ported for three successive mornings from a military mortuary to the Union Buildings before the body is flown to the Eastern Cape for the state funeral in Mandela's childhood home of Qunu.

On its way to the Union Buildings, the black hearse carrying the coffin past knots of well-wishers on the streets of Pretoria was escorted by a phalanx of police motorcycle outriders. Authorities had urged South Africans to form a "people's" honor guard along the route of the cortege.

Many streets in the capital were closed to normal traffic as the cortege passed by. Some people bowed their heads. Others raised their fists in the militant salute Mandela favored. Women gathered to sing his praises. □

## Canada: postal service to drop home delivery

**TORONTO (AP)** — Canada's postal service said Wednesday it will phase out home delivery within urban centers within the next five years as it begins to post significant financial losses due to growing use of digital communication. Canada Post, a government corporation, said it will replace foot delivery with community mail boxes. About a third of Canadian homes still receive mail to their door.

A Conference Board of Canada study estimated savings of US\$542 million (CA\$576 million) a year by eliminating door-to-door delivery to urban homes. It also plans to eliminate 6,000 to 8,000 jobs during the next five years, mainly through attrition. The postal service expects nearly 15,000 employees to retire or leave the company in the next five years. Canada Post employed 68,000 at the end of the 2012 fiscal year.

The company's core mail operations have been losing hundreds of millions of dollars per quarter for several quarters in a row.

Canada Post said if left unchecked, continued losses would soon jeopardize its financial self-sufficiency and become a significant burden on taxpayers and customers.

"What Canadians expect from their postal system is changing dramatically. That requires an equally dramatic change in the size, structure and direction of Canada Post," it said in a report. "Future success will require a leaner workforce, more competitive wages and benefits and greater flexibility."

Last month, Canada Post announced that it would ask the Canadian government for financial relief next year to help support a restructuring of its business model and pension plan framework to assure long-term financial sustainability.

The postal service has faced intense competition from couriers. □



Pope Francis waves in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013. Time magazine announced Pope Francis as its Person of the Year on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino)

## POPE FRANCIS

Continued from Front

He has also emphasized compassion over condemnation in dealing with touchy topics like abortion, gays and contraception. He has denounced the world's "idolatry of money" and the "global scandal" that nearly 1 billion people today go hungry, and has charmed the masses with his simple style and wry sense of humor.

His appearances draw tens of thousands of people and his @Pontifex Twitter account recently topped 10 million followers.

"He really stood out to us as someone who has changed the tone and the perception and the focus of one of the world's largest institutions in an extraordinary way," said Nancy Gibbs, the magazine's managing editor.

The Vatican said the honor wasn't surprising given the resonance in the general public that Francis has had, but it nevertheless said the choice was a "positive" recognition of spiritual values in the international media.

"The Holy Father is not looking to become famous or to receive honors," said the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi. "But if the choice of Person of Year helps spread the message of the Gospel — a message of God's love for everyone — he will certainly be happy about that." □

## Israel slams Dutch company for cutting water ties

ARON HELLER  
Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — A Dutch water company's decision to cut ties with Israel's national water carrier over its operations in the West Bank sparked anger in Israel on Wednesday, in the latest instance of growing international impatience with Israel's settlement enterprise.

Vitens, the largest drinking water supplier in the Netherlands, said it was ending its joint projects with the Mekorot water company since "these cannot be seen outside their political context."

The European Union, along with most of the international community, considers Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem illegal and an obstacle to the establishment of a Palestinian state in territories Israel conquered in the

1967 Mideast war. With nearly 600,000 Israelis now living on lands captured in 1967, the Palestinians say the continued settlement construction is a sign of bad faith and making it ever more difficult to partition the land.

Israeli settlement practices have come under heavy international criticism since peace talks with the Palestinians resumed in July. A series of Israeli announcements to build more settlement homes have drawn international condemnations and Palestinian threats to walk out of the talks, and prompted U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to question Israel's commitment to peace.

Israel has rejected the criticism of its settlements, saying their fate should be resolved through negotiations.

Israeli Foreign Ministry Spokesman Yigal Palmor said that Vitens' decision was "devoid of any common sense," particularly since the Israeli company has cooperated closely with Jordan and the Palestinians on water projects under the auspices of the World Bank.

"They have probably caved into political pressure by anti-Israel groups, and in their eagerness to pander to those groups they have scored high points in the theater of the absurd," he said.

But Tzipi Livni, Israel's chief peace negotiator, said the Dutch decision reflected just how isolated Israel has become over the settlement issue.

Speaking at Tel Aviv University, said said "it hurts my heart" to see the Dutch end cooperation with Mekorot, which does work in the West Bank on behalf

of Israelis and Palestinians. "But in the international community no one cares what actually happens. It's enough that they're located there to reject them," she said.

The Israeli government has been struggling to balance its ideological support for settlements while preserving the country's economic ties to Western allies at a time when it is increasingly isolated. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party, as well as many of his coalition partners, are filled with supporters of the Jewish settlements.

In another potential stumbling block for Israel, Romania said Wednesday that a plan it is negotiating with Israel to send it much-needed construction workers will have to adhere to EU requirements that they not be employed in the settlements. □

## Dutch couple freed by abductors in Yemen



Dutch freelance journalist Judith Spiegel, center, speaks to reporters as she and her husband Boudewijn Berendsen, left, attend a press conference in Sanaa, Yemen, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013. The Dutch government says the reporter and her partner who were taken hostage in Yemen six months ago have been released unharmed.

**SANAA, Yemen (AP)** — A Dutch couple freed after months in captivity in Yemen said they received good treatment from their abductors as they began their trip back home early Wednesday.

Dutch journalist Judith Spiegel and her partner Boudewijn Berendsen

spoke to reporters at the Sanaa airport as they prepared to leave the country.

Spiegel didn't provide details about who was behind the abduction or the circumstances surrounding the kidnapping. She said she felt "a little unhappy to leave Yemen for this reason

and so suddenly." "We are very, very, very happy of course that finally this kidnap is over," she said. "We are doing very well, we were treated very well ... We were treated the Yemeni way, so that was very nice, from the not so nice kidnapping."

Spiegel, who works for

the Dutch national broadcaster NOS and the newspaper NRC Handelsblad, thanked those who helped secure their release.

"I hope with all my heart that these kidnappings stop," she said. "I am looking forward to the day where Yemen is safe enough to come back to." The couple were snatched in Sanaa on June 8 and released in recent days close to the Dutch embassy in the Yemeni capital.

The Dutch foreign ministry said Tuesday that the couple are in "good physical condition, extremely happy to have survived their ordeal unharmed and wishes nothing more than to be soonest reunited with their family."

Dutch Ambassador Jeroen Verheul in Yemen posted a message on his Twitter account announcing the news of their release and saying, "happy to confirm that Judith and Boudewijn have been released safe and sound. Thankful to Yemen government for their full support!" □

## Republicans Voice Support For Budget Pact

Continued from Front

Democrats are taking a major hit over the flawed roll-out of the president's massive health care overhaul. Republicans have lost favor for having forced the 16-day government shutdown and bringing the U.S. to the brink of a debt default in October, when budget negotiations fell apart over the opposition party's attempt to derail the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare. The shutdown cost the government and the economy billions of dollars.

In welcome news to House Republican leaders, Rep. Jeff Miller said most Republicans would back the deal worked out by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan and Democratic Sen. Patty Murray.

The House plans to vote before it adjourns for the year Friday.

There was some grumbling from liberals and conservatives over the pact's failure to solve long-term tax and spending issues and address expiring unemployment benefits.

Sen. Rand Paul, a potential 2016 Republican presidential candidate, announced his opposition, saying that "undoing tens of billions of this modest spending restraint is shameful and must be opposed."

But House Speaker John Boehner dismissed criticism from groups such as Heritage Action, which raise money as they criticize Republicans for being insufficiently conservative.

"They're using our mem-

bers and they're using the American people to further their own goals," Boehner said. "This is ridiculous."

Some House Democrats were less than enthusiastic, too.

"Stay tuned," said Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, when asked about whether Democrats would support

another failure by Congress to negotiate a deal on government spending, that time back in 2011.

Congress needed to reach a deal this time because the legislation that ended the partial government shutdown in October expires on Jan. 15. The agreement stipulates a

It would set the stage for action in January on a \$1 trillion-plus spending bill for the budget year that began in October. An estimate by the Congressional Budget Office says that the deal would add \$23 billion to the deficit for the ongoing 2014 budget year and add another \$22.3 bil-



From left, House Rules Committee Minority Staff Director Miles Lackey, Rep. Sander Levin, D-Michigan, D-Mich., the ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., the ranking member of the House Budget Committee, and Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, gather as her panel meets to consider the budget compromise struck this week by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., and Senate Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray, D-Wash., at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

the bill.

The deal reached Tuesday restores about \$63 billion in across-the-board automatic spending cuts to programs ranging from parks to the Defense Department.

Those crude cuts — known as the sequester — were the delayed result of yet

new spending level for the remainder of the current budget year as well as the one that begins next Oct. 1.

The deal is aimed less at chipping away at the \$17 trillion national debt more at trying to stop Washington from lurching from crisis to crisis.

lion over the 2015-16 time-frame.

The White House issued a statement Wednesday praising the bill for "critical investments in areas such as education, infrastructure, and scientific research, while keeping the Nation on the path to long-term deficit reduction." □

## Senate staffer's home searched in investigation

TRAVIS LOLLER  
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)

— U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander said Wednesday he has placed his chief of staff on unpaid leave after learning the staffer's home was being searched as part of a child pornography investigation.

In a news release, Alexander said he had just been

informed by the Senate legal counsel's office that law enforcement agents were conducting a search of Ryan Loskarn's home.

"I am stunned, surprised and disappointed by what I have learned," Alexander said in the news release. Phone and email messages left for Loskarn were not immediately returned.

Video taken at the scene

by WJLA-TV shows Loskarn being led from his home by U.S. Postal Inspector police. Loskarn appears to be in handcuffs, although a coat is draped over his arms.

U.S. Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr said in a statement that Loskarn was arrested based on probable cause for possession and distribution of child pornography charges.

On Wednesday afternoon, Loskarn remained in custody pending a court hearing that was expected to be scheduled for Wednesday at federal court in Washington, D.C.

Alexander is a former Tennessee governor and has also served as the U.S. Secretary of Education. He was first elected to the Senate in 2002. □

## US man faces charges over revenge porn

DON THOMPSON  
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) — A man was charged Tuesday with operating a website that let people anonymously post explicit photographs of others so that he could extort hundreds of dollars from the victims.

Kevin Christopher Bollaert, 27, was arrested on 31 felony counts of conspiracy, identity theft and extortion. Bollaert created the so-called "revenge porn" website ugotposted.com a year ago, according to court documents. The site let people anonymously post more than 10,000 nude and explicit photographs of others without their permission, investigators said.

Unlike most such sites, investigators said ugotposted.com required that the victim be identified by name, age and other information, leading to the identity theft allegations. He is charged with obtaining identifying information with the intent to annoy or harass.

Bollaert's attorney, Alexander Landon, did not return a telephone message seeking comment.

The documents say Bollaert charged victims a fee ranging from \$249.99 to \$350 to remove the images, using emails sent through a second website, changemyreputation.com. That led to the extortion charges.

Both websites were inactive as of Tuesday.

His activities "turned their public humiliation and betrayal into a commodity with the potential to devastate lives," Attorney General Kamala Harris said in a statement.

Bollaert was released from San Diego County jail after posting \$50,000 bail. He is set to appear in court Dec. 17.

The department says he told investigators during a six-month investigation that he received about \$900 each month from online advertising. □

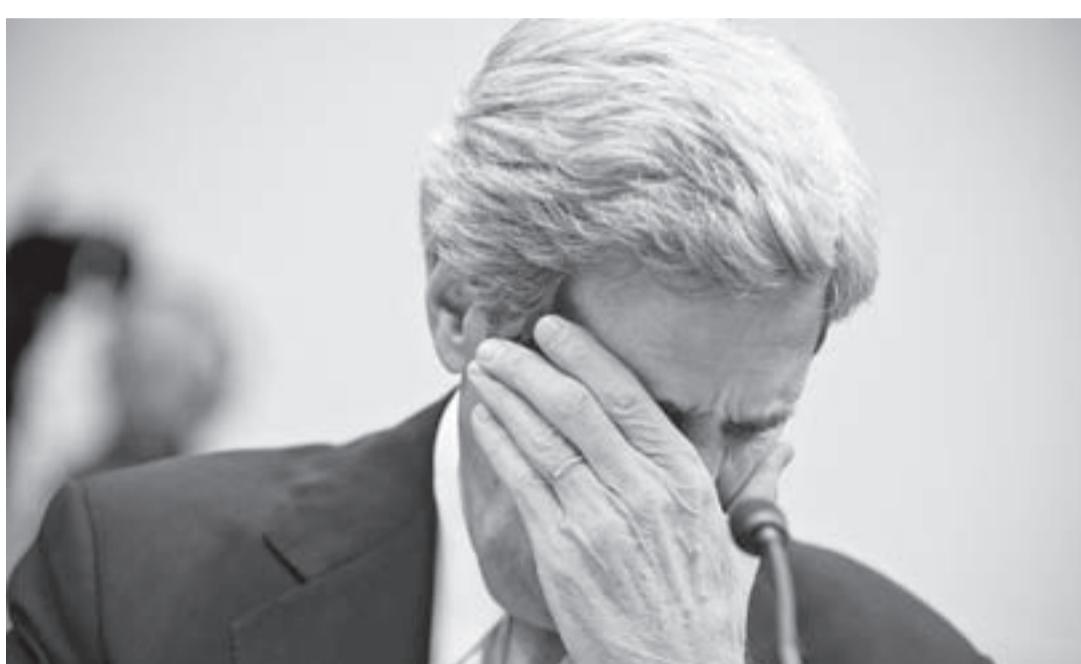


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Secretary of State John Kerry pauses while testifying on Capitol Hill in Washington this week, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to persuade Congress to not forge any new economic sanctions on Iran that could break the recent historic agreement that would end Iran's progress toward weapons-grade uranium.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

**BRADLEY KLAPPER**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Possible U.S. House action this week against Iran could fall short of new penalties that might derail a short-term nuclear agreement and Senate steps seem further off, legislative aides said Wednesday, as the Obama administration appealed for patience.

In the House, the aides said Republican Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Virginia, could introduce a nonbinding resolution as early as Thursday spelling out suggested terms for any final deal. The goal would be a vote before the House leaves on recess Friday.

Senate aides reported that Democratic Majority Leader Harry Reid was talking about possible votes in January. His intent, they said, was to ensure the issue does not interfere with passage of a defense bill before senators break next week for Christmas.

As a result, Congress is

not expected to approve new sanctions until January at the earliest, giving President Barack Obama at least a few more weeks before his diplomatic effort could face added complications.

The aides spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the legislative maneuvering. The U.S. and other world powers reached an agreement with Iran last month that provides Iran with \$7 billion in relief from U.S. economic penalties in exchange for a series of nuclear concessions.

The administration also committed to no new nuclear-related penalties for six months, a promise that upset members of both parties in Congress.

Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew met with much of the Senate in private Wednesday in a renewed effort to hold on any legislation that might scuttle the nuclear deal.

Kerry told the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday that even if lawmakers suspended fresh penalties on condition that Iran didn't violate its commitments, those sanctions would be a sign of bad faith to America's negotiating partners and could provide Tehran with an excuse to walk away from negotiations.

Obama and Kerry say a final deal next year is uncertain, but stress that diplomacy is far preferable to any military solution.

Iran insists its nuclear program is solely designed for peaceful energy generation and medical research purposes. The U.S. and several other countries long have viewed the program as a covert attempt by Iran

to develop nuclear weapons capability.

Sens. Bob Menendez, a Democrat, and Mark Kirk, a Republican, are close to completing a bill that would require that the administration certify every 30 days Iran's adherence to the interim pact, according to legislative aides.

Without that certification, the legislation would reimpose all penalties and introduce new restrictions on Iran's engineering, mining and construction industries. The legislation also calls for a global boycott of Iranian oil by 2015 if Iran fails to live up to the interim agreement. Foreign companies and banks violating the bans would be barred from doing business in the United States. □

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## Chicago police release man alleging torture

DON BABWIN

M. SPENCER GREEN

Associated Press

**PONTIAC, Illinois (AP)** — A judge overturned the conviction of a man who for decades insisted that police tortured him until he confessed to a rape he did not commit, freeing him Wednesday after 30 years behind bars.

Judge Richard Walsh overturned his conviction Tuesday, saying officers lied

darkest chapters of Chicago Police Department history, in which officers working under former Lt. Jon Burge were accused of torturing suspects into false confessions and torturing witnesses into falsely implicating people in crimes. Wrice has insisted for years that he confessed to the 1982 sexual assault after officers beat him in the groin and face. And a witness testified at a hearing

all of them black — have claimed that, starting in the 1970s, Burge and his officers beat or shocked them into confessing to crimes ranging from armed robbery to murder.

In court Tuesday, Wrice testified that two former officers beat him with a flashlight and a 20-inch (50 centimeter) piece of rubber — the same weapons, lawyers say, that others have said the two used on



Stanley Wrice, center, convicted of rape and sentenced to 100 years in prison in 1982, speaks to the media with his lawyer Heidi Linn Lambros, left, and his daughter, Gail Lewis, as he leaves Pontiac Correctional Center Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013 in Pontiac, Ill.

about how they had treated Stanley Wrice, 59.

"It's just an overwhelming feeling of joy, happiness that finally it's over with," Wrice said, moments after he walked into the arms of his two daughters, attorneys and others who greeted him as he left prison.

Wrice, whose belongings after so long in prison amounted to a small box filled with photographs, legal papers and letters, said his immediate plans were to eat a cheeseburger and get some sleep; he said he had none Tuesday night. The ruling was just the latest development in one of the

Tuesday that he falsely implicated Wrice in the rape after two Chicago police officers under Burge's command tortured him.

Wrice was sentenced to 100 years in prison.

It will be up to a special prosecutor to decide whether to retry him following his release. The special prosecutor did not return a call seeking comment Tuesday evening.

Wrice joins a number of men who in recent years have been released from prison because they were tortured into confessing at the hands of Burge's men. Dozens of men — almost

them to get them to confess to crimes or implicate others in crimes they did not commit.

The officers refused to testify at Tuesday's hearing, citing their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination.

No Chicago police officers have been convicted of torturing suspects, but Burge was convicted in 2010 for lying in a civil suit when he said he'd never witnessed or participated in the torture of suspects. He is serving a 4 1/2-year sentence in federal prison for perjury and obstruction of justice. □

## Study: Federal contracts given to flagrant labor law violators

STEVEN GREENHOUSE

© 2013 New York Times

A new congressional report criticizes the federal government for awarding tens of billions of dollars in contracts to companies even though they were found to have violated safety and wage laws and paid millions in penalties.

Issued on behalf of the Democratic senators on the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee, the report cited examples over the past six years.

For instance, Imperial Sugar had \$94.8 million in federal contracts last year, even though it paid \$6 million in safety penalties over a 2008 factory explosion in Georgia that killed 14 workers. The report also noted that the federal government had awarded \$4.2 billion in contracts to Tyson Foods since 2000, even though Tyson has faced more than \$500,000 in safety penalties since 2007 and 11 of its workers have died on the job since 1999.

The report urges the government to weigh a company's safety and wage violations more closely as it awards contracts, which are about \$500 billion a year to companies employing 26 million workers, representing 22 percent of the nation's workforce.

It stops short of recommending automatic suspension of contracts or debarring contractors that were found to have violated federal laws, partly because government agencies were sometimes at fault, a committee staff member said.

"Taxpayer dollars are routinely being paid to companies that are putting the livelihoods and the lives of workers at risk," the report said. "Many of the most flagrant violators of federal workplace safety and wage laws are also recipients of large federal contracts."

According to the report, 18 federal contractors — including Imperial Sugar — were among the recipients of the largest 100 penalties issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from 2007 to 2012. The report found that 32 federal contractors were among the leading companies in the amount of back pay assessed for wage violations between 2007 and 2012.

"Overall, the 49 federal contractors responsible for large violations of federal labor laws were cited for 1,776 separate violations of these laws and paid \$196 million in penalties and assessments," the report said. "In fiscal year 2012, these same companies were awarded \$81 billion in taxpayer dollars."

The report, commissioned by the committee's chairman, Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, recommended that the Labor Department improve the quality of information it provides about violations, and urged the agency to publish an annual list of federal contractors, showing the penalties they faced and their rate of compliance with wage and safety laws.

In addition, the report called on the president to require contracting officers to consult with the Labor Department to determine whether the contractor meets "responsibility" standards to qualify for federal contracts. □

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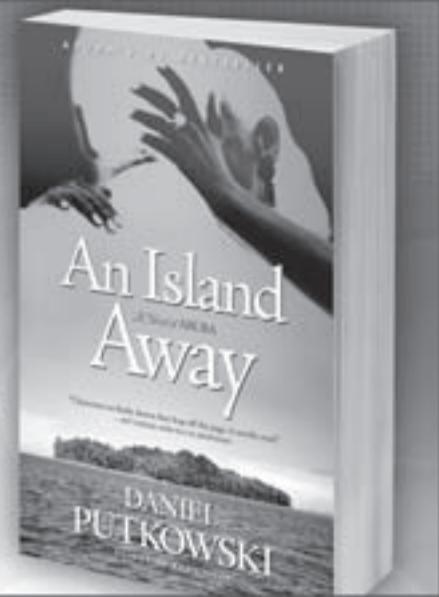
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## US Financial Front:

# How Volcker Rule would limit American banks' risky bets

MARCY GORDON

AP Business Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — U.S. regulators have approved a rule that seeks to defuse the kind of risk-taking on Wall Street that helped trigger the 2008 financial crisis. The Volcker Rule is expected to change the way the largest U.S. banks do business. It strives to limit banks' riskiest trading bets that could implode at taxpayers' expense. Some think the rule goes too far, others not far enough.

The rule is named for Paul Volcker, a former Federal Reserve chairman who was an adviser to President Barack Obama during the financial crisis. Volcker urged a ban on high-risk trading by big banks to diminish the likelihood that U.S. taxpayers might have to rescue them, as they did after the financial crisis.

Here are questions and answers about the Volcker Rule:

### Q: What is it?

**A:** The Volcker Rule is a key plank of a financial regulation law enacted in 2010 to try to reduce the likelihood of another crisis and a resulting government bailout. The rule is intended to bar banks from trading for their own profit. This activity is known as proprietary trading. It's become a huge money-making machine for mega Wall Street banks, like Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase and Morgan Stanley. Under the rule, the banks will be required to trade mainly on

their clients' behalf.

Still, if it were that simple, the final draft would be a lot shorter than its roughly 920 pages — about as long as Dostoyevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov." The rule left to regulators the burden of finalizing the fine print. Besides curbing proprietary trading, the Volcker Rule limits banks' investments in hedge funds and private equity funds, which are high-risk, lightly regulated investment pools.

### Q: Where are the complications?

**A:** The ban on proprietary trading isn't absolute. There are exemptions. One involves an important activity called market making. When big banks engage in market making, they use their own money to take the opposite side of a customer's trade: They buy or sell an investment to help execute the trade.

### Q: Why does the Volcker Rule matter?

**A:** Because of the widely agreed-upon need to reduce the dangers that remain in the banking system. Proprietary trading has allowed big banks to tap depositors' money in federally insured bank accounts — essentially borrowing against that money and using it for investments, such as in mortgage-backed securities. When those bets soured during the crisis — especially after a wave of mortgage defaults — the banks were at risk of failing. Most survived only because of taxpayer-

funded bailouts.

### Q: So would banks be barred from investing the money I deposit?

**A:** The short answer is no. When people deposit money in a bank, they may expect the bank to use it for conventional safe investments, such as bonds. Those would still be allowed. But banks could no longer borrow against depositors' money to seek

making. The line can be blurry.

Another challenge: No fewer than five agencies, including the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission, had to grapple with the rule and reach common ground.

If that weren't enough, industry lobbyists used their muscle to try to preserve the banks' trading operations. They won a round

could bar them from legitimate market-making on behalf of customers and from appropriately limiting their risks by hedging broader portfolios.

### Q: But the final rule doesn't include such an exemption for "portfolio hedging."

#### Why not?

**A:** An event in 2012 may have led regulators to rethink such an exemption. JPMorgan traders in Lon-



Paul Volcker, a former chairman of the Federal Reserve, at his office in New York.

(Robert Caplin/The New York Times)

outsize returns on complex investments, like derivatives. Derivatives are investments based on the value of an underlying commodity or security, such as oil, mortgages, interest rates or currencies.

### Q: How did the rule become so complicated?

**A:** Regulators found it hard to isolate what precisely distinguishes proprietary trading from, say, market-

in 2011, when regulators approved a draft that exempted "portfolio hedging" from the trading ban. This meant banks could make trades for their own profit to offset the risks of either individual investments or a broader investment portfolio.

### Q: What was the banks' argument?

**A:** They contended that a ban on proprietary trading

don made huge trades on derivatives with the bank's money — an ill-conceived bet that cost the bank \$6 billion. When the losses came to light, they damaged the bank's reputation. Experts believe the "London Whale" trades, as they became known, helped speed momentum toward a stricter rule. In its latest form, the rule does not exempt portfolio hedging. □

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**Kiev:**

## Police pull out of square after storming camps

DAVID M. HERZENHORN

ANDREW E. KRAMER

© 2013 New York Times

KIEV, Ukraine - After a night of clashes with protesters in Independence Square, security forces appeared to pull back Wednesday from the central plaza in Kiev where demonstrators have been rallying against the government of President Viktor F. Yanukovych for more than two weeks.

The police had taken control of a large section of the square and brought in front-end loaders and other heavy equipment to clear it. But by 11 a.m., the police presence had dwindled and pedestrians were walking freely through the square.

The interior minister, Vitaliy Zakharchenko, issued a statement Wednesday saying the overnight crackdown had been needed to ease traffic congestion in Kiev and promised that there would be no dispersal of the protesters in the square.

"No one infringes on citizens' rights to peaceful protests," he said. "But we cannot ignore the rights and legal interests of other citizens."

He said the clearing of the streets was carried out in accordance with a court order. Many protesters had been calling for Zakharchenko's dismissal after a bloody crackdown on demonstrators Nov. 30. Although the police pushed forcefully through the crowd in the square early Wednesday, they did not use their truncheons and there was no repeat of the

flagrant violence of two weeks ago.

The effort to clear large parts of the main protest site overnight was a stinging rebuke to Western diplomats who thought they had received promises that force would not be used against peaceful demonstrators.

Arseniy P. Yatsenyuk, the leader in Parliament of the

sound system was still functioning Wednesday. "We won't forgive this."

Those officials were inevitably left wondering if they had miscalculated in urging leaders of the protests to negotiate with Yanukovych and in their own efforts to do so. The crackdown by the authorities came after a 3 1/2-hour meeting between Yan-

State John Kerry expressed the United States' "disgust" with the authorities' decision to use force.

"This response is neither acceptable nor does it befit a democracy," he said in a statement.

He added: "As church bells ring tonight amidst the smoke in the streets of Kiev, the United States stands with the people of Ukraine."



Battalions of Ukrainian security forces early Wednesday stormed Independence Square, the central plaza in Kiev where protesters had been rallying against the government of President Viktor F. Yanukovych for more than two weeks. Riot police faced protesters at their camp early Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013, in Kiev.

(Sergey Ponomarev/The New York Times)

opposition Fatherland Party and a main organizer of the protest movement, said the police action showed that Yanukovych was dismissive of Western leaders, and of Ukrainians.

"He spit in the face of America, EU countries and 46 million Ukrainians," Yatsenyuk said in remarks from the stage at Independence Square, where the

Yanukovych and Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief.

The diplomatic consequences became apparent almost immediately.

"I was among you," Ashton said in a statement Wednesday. "The authorities did not need to act under the cover of night." And in unusually strong language, U.S. Secretary of

They deserve better."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who was in Kiev as the police action unfolded, visited Independence Square on Wednesday to hand out bread to demonstrators and to Interior Ministry police officers who spent the night on the street before heading to a meeting with Yanukovych. □

## Syria: US halting nonlethal aid to northern rebels

MICHAEL R. GORDON

© 2013 New York Times

DAMASCUS/WASHINGTON

- The United States has suspended the delivery of nonlethal aid to the Syrian opposition in northern Syria after concluding that some of it has fallen into the hands of extremist Islamic fighters, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The decision was made after moderate Syrian rebel forces reporting to Gen. Salim Idris, the nominal head of the rebel Free Syrian Army, came under attack last week from fighters aligned with al-Qaida, according to an account provided by a U.S. official. The Islamic Front, an alliance of rebel fighters that has broken with Idris' moderate opposition but opposes the Qaida affiliate in Syria, joined the fray, the American official said.

After the dust cleared, the Islamic Front appeared to have taken control of warehouses in Atmeh that contain equipment and supplies provided by the United States, added the American official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was discussing internal reports.

The first reports of military actions are often confused and inexact. But it seems clear that U.S. officials are concerned that some aid has indeed fallen into the wrong hands.

"We have seen reports that Islamic Front forces have seized the Atmeh headquarters and warehouses," a State Department official said. □

# Russia may answer conventional attack with nukes

V. ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to a conventional strike and sees them as a "great equalizer" reducing the likelihood of aggression, a senior Russian official said Wednesday.

While Russia amended its military doctrine years ago to allow for the possibility of using nuclear weapons first in retaliation to a non-nuclear attack, the statement by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin reflected Moscow's concern about prospective U.S. conventional weapons.

Weapons that have been developed in the United States under the so-called "prompt global strike" program would be capable of striking targets anywhere in the world in as little as an hour with deadly precision. Russia, which has lagged far behind in developing such weapons, has described them as destabilizing.

Without naming the U.S., Rogozin told lawmakers in comments carried by Russian news agencies said that those who "experiment with non-nuclear strategic weapons" should remember that "if we come under attack, we will undoubtedly use nuclear weapons in certain situations to defend our territory and state interests."

He said that it should discourage any potential aggressor.

"We have never underestimated the role of nuclear weapons ... as a 'great equalizer,'" Rogozin said.

Asked for reaction, an official at North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters

in Brussels said, "NATO has stated repeatedly that it does not view Russia as an adversary. Last year at the Chicago Summit, NATO leaders reiterated their desire to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia."

NATO is committed to the principles laid out in the Founding Act of the NATO-Russia Council, and works productively with Russia across a range of issues of common concern."

The Russian doctrine mirrors the American strategy during the Cold War, when the U.S. would not rule out using nuclear weapons first, because it feared it might have to do so in response to overwhelming conventional attack on western Europe by Soviet forces.

Rogozin said that Russia is working on developing its own version of the "prompt global strike" weapons, but wouldn't give any details.

The U.S. plans included modifying some of the existing nuclear-armed missiles to carry conventional warheads as well as designing new vehicles capable of traveling at least five times the speed of sound. Russian officials said that such U.S. weapons wouldn't fall under any restrictions but would have combat efficiency comparable to nuclear weapons, and thus should be included in any prospective nuclear arms reduction talks.

Russian suspicions about the U.S. intentions have aggravated tensions caused by a dispute over the U.S.-led NATO missile defense program, which Moscow sees as a threat to its nuclear deterrent.

Russia has increasingly relied on nuclear weapons in



In this October, 1999 photo a Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile is launched from the northern Plesetsk cosmodrome in Russia. A Russian Cabinet member says Moscow has reserved the right to use nuclear weapons in response to a conventional strike. Wednesday's comments by Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin carried by Russian news agencies reflected Moscow's concern with prospective U.S. weapons.

(AP Photo/Str)

its military strategy to compensate for a post-Soviet decline in its conventional forces.

The nation's military doctrine says it may use nuclear weapons to counter a nuclear attack on Russia or an ally, or a large-scale conventional attack that threatens Russia's existence. Rogozin's comment comes a day after President Vladimir Putin pledged to continue an ambitious weapons modernization program and to expand Russia's military presence in the Arctic region. Putin has pointed at the U.S. navy presence in the Arctic Ocean as one of the reasons behind the buildup, saying that Russia is concerned because it takes U.S. missiles just 15 to 16 minutes to reach Moscow from a submarine in the Barents Sea region.

The statements reflected the current strain in Russian-U.S. relations, which have been hurt by disputes over the U.S.-led missile shield, Russia's human rights record and, most recently, differences over Ukraine. □

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UN:

## Major offensive begins against Congo rebels

CARA ANNA

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) —

United Nations officials say a major offensive has begun against a Rwanda-linked rebel group in eastern Congo following last month's defeat of the M23 rebels.

The officials on Wednesday told the Security Council that defeating the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or FDLR, will be difficult because they live among the general population, increasing the risk of civilian deaths. The group was formed by extremist Hutus from neighboring Rwanda who took part in that country's 1994 genocide, then fled across the border.

But the officials sounded more optimistic about the troubled region than they have in a long time.

"Many areas are liberated," said the U.N. Special Representative in Congo, Martin Kobler. "You see it in the eyes of the population, and there is still some hesitancy, but there is a chance that this time the situation is irreversible."

The offensive against the FDLR began Nov. 27. Other, smaller armed groups also are the target, but some already are giving up their weapons with the defeat of the M23.

"Important progress was made this week," Kobler said, especially with the opening of a key route from the newly liberated

town of Pinga toward the regional city of Goma. The road had been closed for two years, he said.

In Kinshasa, the commander of the U.N. peacekeepers in Congo, Lt. Gen. Carlos dos Santos Cruz, said the FDLR "has one last opportunity to turn themselves in, and if not we will remove them."

Kobler estimated the size of the FDLR forces at 1,500 to 1,800, but that's difficult to estimate as many live among the civilian population.

French Ambassador Gerard Araud, the current Security Council president, called the defeat of the M23 a success but a fragile one. Last month, the M23 fled under pressure

from the Congolese army, U.N. peacekeepers and a newly created U.N. special intervention brigade.

"When you look at where we were eight months ago, I'd say that's quite a feat," Araud said.

The U.N. officials also were optimistic about the launch of the first fleet of U.N. drones this month in the eastern Congo. The Security Council gave approval in January for the trial use of unarmed drones for intelligence gathering there. Five in all are being launched in the region.

Congolese Minister of Defense Luba Tambo has said the drones will play a critical role in helping patrol the porous border with Rwanda. □

## Japan defense panel calls for expanded role

MARTIN FACKLER

© 2013 New York Times

TOKYO — Japan must strengthen its defense and seek a larger regional role as the balance of power shifts with the rise of China and declining U.S. influence, according to a draft of a new national security strategy released Wednesday.

The draft, written by a group of experts appointed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, called for building even closer military ties with the United States, the postwar guarantor of Japanese security that still has 50,000 military personnel based in Japan.

However, it also said Japan must "strengthen its own capabilities and expand its own roles"

by such steps as bolstering anti-missile defenses and its ability to defend freedom of navigation in surrounding seas — an apparent reference to China's growing naval presence in the region.

The new strategy did not call for a sudden buildup in forces, and it appeared to be consistent with Japan's gradual increase in its willingness and ability to defend itself in recent years, especially since a dispute over islands has heated up with China.

Still, it offered a glimpse at how far Japan has come from a firmly pacifist nation that just two decades ago had seemed loath to even admit that it had a military. Abe has vowed to give Japan an even stronger security posture, though he still emphasizes that Japan's forces must remain purely defensive.

Speaking to the group of experts, Abe called the draft a "historic document" because it is Japan's first attempt at creating what it officially calls a national security strategy,

and comes as Japan has created a new U.S.-style national security council to strengthen its response to the changing regional environment. □

## Bangladesh halts execution of opposition leader



Abdur Razzak, left, lawyer of Islamist opposition leader Abdul Quader Mollah, talks to the media outside a court in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013. Mollah, convicted of war crimes during the nation's war of independence against Pakistan in 1971, was due to be executed at 00:01 Wednesday, but lawyers went to the home of Judge Syed Mahmud Hossain and secured a postponement.

JULHAS ALAM  
Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)

— Lawyers for a leader of Bangladesh's largest Islamic party sought Wednesday to have his death sentence thrown out after a late-night reprieve saved his life just hours before he was to be hanged.

Abdul Quader Mollah, convicted of war crimes during the nation's war of independence against Pakistan in 1971, was due to be

executed at a minute past midnight, but lawyers went to the home of Judge Syed Mahmud Hossain and secured a postponement.

The lawyers are trying to convince the Supreme Court to throw out the sentence in a case that could usher in a new wave of political violence ahead of national elections set for next month.

After beginning to hear the case Wednesday, the Supreme Court adjourned

until Thursday. Mollah's party, Jamaat-e-Islami, an ally of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, enforced a nationwide general strike on Wednesday and issued a statement warning of "dire consequences" if he were executed.

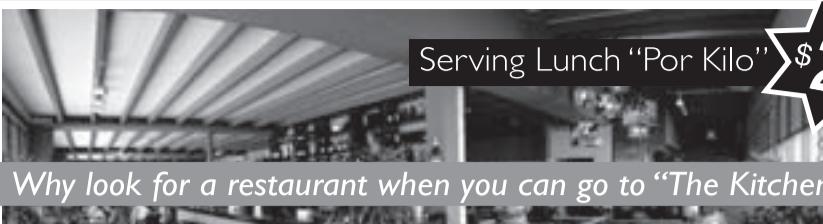
Hundreds of pro-government activists, meanwhile, blocked traffic on a main road in Dhaka demanding Mollah's immediate execution.

(AP Photo/A. M. Ahad)



## Where the locals eat, so why wouldn't you ?

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## Interpreter at Mandela service said to be an impostor

JOHN ELIGON

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News Service

**QUNU, South Africa** - The man responsible for providing sign language interpretation at Nelson Mandela's memorial service Tuesday was a fraud, according to DeafSA, a deaf advocacy organization based in Johannesburg.

In a statement posted on its Facebook page, the group said that the "deaf community is in outrage." The man, who was not identified, was part of

the television coverage viewed around the world, standing next to a procession of leaders including President Barack Obama who eulogized Mandela at an enormous soccer stadium in Soweto, South Africa. "The organizers of the memorial service, and indeed any event, should have contacted organizations who coordinate South African Sign Language interpreting services to secure a professional, trained experienced interpreter," said the statement by the

group's national director, Bruno Druchen.

The group called the man's validity into question for

several reasons. For one, he was using self-invented signs, according to the statement. He did not,



The as yet unidentified interpreter during President Barack Obama's eulogy for Mandela at the soccer stadium in Soweto, Johannesburg on Tuesday, Dec. 10.

(Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

for instance, use the established signs for Mandela or President Jacob Zuma. His handshapes were meaningless, the statement said, and he failed to use facial expressions, an important part of South African sign language.

"It is a total mockery of the language," statement said. "This proves that he is not involved in the Deaf community and doesn't know South African Sign Language."

A spokesman for Zuma did not immediately return a call for comment.

DeafSA said the man appeared at an event for the African National Congress last year, and the group filed a complaint based on his work, according to The Associated Press. □

## India: Court restores ban on gay sex

GARDINER HARRIS

© 2013 New York Times

NEW DELHI - Gay sex became illegal again in India Wednesday after the Indian Supreme Court overturned a lower court's landmark 2009 ruling that had judged the country's 19th century law banning gay sex between consenting adults to be unconstitutional.

The ruling means that the 1861 law, which forbids "carnal intercourse against the order of nature with man, woman or animal," is again in effect. The law makes gay sex punishable by 10 years in prison. Only Parliament can change that law, the Supreme Court ruled.

There is almost no chance that Parliament will act where the Supreme Court did not, advocates and opponents of the law agreed. And with the Bharatiya Janata Party, a conservative Hindu nationalist group, appearing in ascendancy before national elections in the spring, the prospect of any legislative change happening for years is unlikely, analysts said. □

Anjali Gopalan, founder of a charity that sued to overturn the law, said she was "shocked" by the ruling.

"This is taking many, many steps back. The Supreme Court has not just let down the LGBT community," Gopalan said, referring to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders, "but the constitution of India."

S.Q.R. Ilyas, a member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, which had filed a petition in the case asking that the lower court ruling be reversed, praised Wednesday's ruling.

"These relationships are unethical as well as unnatural," Ilyas said. "They create problems in society, both moral and social."

This is a sin as far as Islam is concerned."

The law banning gay sex is rarely enforced in India, but the police sometimes use it to bully and intimidate gays. In rare cases, health charities that hand out condoms to gays to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS have seen their work interrupted because such efforts are technically illegal. □

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## Cobalt-60 finally removed from Mexican cornfield

OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ

Associated Press

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — A shipment of highly radioactive cobalt-60 was safely recovered Tuesday evening after sitting in the cornfield where it was found a week ago dumped by truck thieves in central Mexico, the country's nuclear safety director said.

Juan Eibenschutz, director general of the National Commission of Nuclear Safety and Safeguards, said a robot was used to scoop up the dangerous material and deposit it in a safe container for transporting to a nuclear waste treatment facility.

"It's been recovered, and it's on its way to the waste site," he said.

Earlier Tuesday, Eibenschutz had said the cobalt-60 was still in the field because emergency workers hadn't been able to get the robot close enough due to bales of corn stalks in the field. He said workers were clearing a path.

"Things turned out well," he said a few hours later. "The operators of the robot prepared everything and were able to secure the material."

The federal police force said it provided the robot. Its statement added that 100 federal police, marines and local officers were still guarding the area.

Eibenschutz said a farmer

was being checked at a hospital after showing signs of radiation exposure. The man, who lives in the nearby farming town of Hueypoxtla, told authorities that he handled the material after finding it in the field and started feeling sick soon af-

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A resident rides a donkey near a home where the radiation head that was part of a radiation therapy machine sits, placed there by the family who found the stolen equipment abandoned in a nearby field, in the village of Hueypoxtla, Mexico. The highly radioactive cobalt-60 was safely recovered early Wednesday morning after sitting in the cornfield where it was found a week ago (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

ter.

The cobalt-60, which was from obsolete medical equipment used in radiation therapy, was being transported to a waste facility by a truck that was stolen at gunpoint early Dec. 2 when the driver stopped

field about a kilometer (a half a mile) from Hueypoxtla, a town of about 4,000 people. Officials have said the material posed no threat to the town, saying it was dangerous only in close proximity.

On Monday, a federal

an official with the Attorney General's Office, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

The farmer exposed to radiation is not a suspect in the case, authorities said. □

## Caribbean panel expands slavery reparation fight

DAVID McFADDEN

Associated Press

**KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)** — A Caribbean commission is expanding the number of former colonial powers it says should provide some form of reparations for the lingering regional impact of the Atlantic slave trade.

At a Tuesday news conference at the Jamaica campus of the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Community Reparations Commission identified eight European nations that should work with regional governments to "address the living legacies of these crimes."

A British law firm hired by Caribbean governments seeking reparations initially targeted Britain, France and the Netherlands. But the Caribbean Community reparations panel, which is acting as an advisory group for regional governments, added the names of Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

"Of course, when we delve deeper into the history, we find that most of the European nations, including those in southern Europe and central Europe, were also involved in this," commission chairman Hilary Beckles said, adding that the group is also gathering information on countries such as Switzerland and Russia.

Beckles, who has written several books on the history of Caribbean slavery, said the commission is preparing to submit its first report to heads of governments, who will ultimately decide how to approach the European nations.

The commission says the wounds of slavery include psychological trauma that is still evident in Caribbean social life and a legacy of scientific and technological "backwardness" due to a focus on the production of raw materials such as sugar during the days of plantation slavery. □

## Mexican Senate approves dramatic oil reform

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — Mexico's Senate on Wednesday approved the most dramatic oil reform in decades, moving the country closer to opening its beleaguered, state-run sector to private companies and investment.

The Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of allowing the government to grant contracts and licenses for exploration and extraction of oil and gas to multinational firms, something currently prohibited under Mexico's constitution. Contracts could be made directly with the state rather than issued by the state-run oil company,

Petroleos Mexicanos, ending its monopoly on Mexican oil. The reform allows contracts for profit- and production-sharing, as well as licenses, in which companies pay royalties and taxes to the Mexican government for the right to explore and drill.

The reform gives private companies the ability to post expected benefits in their financial statements, as long as they specify in their contracts that all oil and gas they find in the ground belongs to Mexico, according to articles expanding on the reform.

The constitution would continue to prohibit oil conces-

sions, considered the most liberal kind of access by private oil companies.

The bill still must be approved by the lower house of Congress and 17 of Mexico's 31 states and Federal District. It's the crowning piece of President Enrique Pena Nieto's first year of reforms, which have also targeted education, the tax system and telecommunications. But energy reform is considered most crucial to the overall economy and the remaining five years of Pena Nieto's presidency. Opponents said the proposal outlines a system that has been proven a "total failure," while analysts con-

sider it an unprecedented move in opening the door to the private investment Mexico needs to save its oil sector. Mexican oil production has been declining despite increased investment, and Pemex has not had the wherewithal to date to exploit the country's vast deep-water or shale oil and gas reserves. The measures in the Senate proposal have been prohibited in the decades since 1938, when then-President Lazaro Cardenas nationalized the oil industry, a step written into the constitution to protect the country from possible profiteering by foreign companies. □

# LOCAL Aruba TODAY

## Aruba's Concierges Enjoy Special Tour At Arikok National Park

- Red Sail Sports concierge staff warmly welcomed and pampered

**SAN FUEGO** – On Tuesday morning December 10 the Arikok National Park management team hosted staff members of Red Sail Sports Concierge Desks to exclusively educate and inform them of the uniqueness of Aruba's natural park, covering 20% of the island. A delicious outdoor breakfast served at Hofi Shon Shoco was followed by a special tour of the park. Hosts of the VIP tour were Arikok Park's director Diego Marquez and research & education expert Indra Zaandam, together with a park ranger driving one of the parks own Land Rovers. The tour included a visit to Moro (Little Aruba) and the Natural Pool, stops at magnificent viewpoints such as Arikok Hilltop and main attractions like the caves inside the national park. Meanwhile Aruba's concierges were educated on the ancient history of Aruba's lava rock formation, dating back to some 95 million years ago. Park director Diego Marquez also explained the park's geological and ecological importance and its diversity of flora and fauna in-



side the park. The Red Sail Sports Concierge staff was even invited to taste the fruits of one of many cactus species inside the park. Park management also elaborated on new developments and future plans such as further development of the Miramar Gold Mine Ruins inside the park, placement of new information signs at main attractions and the launch of a new (road) map for the park, including a brochure with more information on sites to visit. Indra Zaandam focused on the importance of awareness for the park and explained



about the many initiatives the park organizes, such as the open-air Monthly Movie Night, the Junior Rangers Camp and the Bat Program. She also mentioned that volunteers are always welcome to join and participate in special projects. Arikok National Park is a foundation dedicated to nature conservation and education, as well as the preservation of Aruba's cultural heritage. Aruba's National Park covers 20% of the island and is home to diverse local flora and fauna. Its mission is to protect and conserve the natural and cultural surroundings of the National Park. In paying a conservation fee every visitor contributes to the conservation and protection of the natural beauty in Aruba. More in-

formation is available at [www.arubanationalpark.org](http://www.arubanationalpark.org) or on Facebook/Arikok National Park.

In the pictures, concierge staff members Naomi, Jennifer and Lucienne of Red Sail Sports Aruba enjoy

breakfast at Arikok Park's Hofi Shon Shoco, as well as touring the park and enjoying gorgeous views of the island's coastline and paying a visit to the Quadirikiri Cave inside the national park. □



## Loyal visitors honored at the Aruba Marriott Ocean Club



**PALM BEACH** - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring two very nice couples, whom are loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba, at the Marriott Ocean

Club as Distinguished Visitors. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years.

The honorees were Rick and Peggy Thompson of Red Wing, Minnesota, and Fred and Lola Springer of Olney, Maryland. The honorees are loyal members



of the Marriott Ocean Club and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, and being on Aruba and staying at the Ocean Club is like being home for them. The certificates were presented by Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Lisette Bouwman, Lilian Britten and Erwin Noguera, GM at the Marriott Ocean Club. □

**Beauty On The Beach**  
**Lauren Smith**  
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### Kittens looking for a volunteer to get them home before Christmas!

**ORANJESTAD** - We are hoping to find a volunteer to take a mother, Pumpkin and her kittens to their new 'forever homes' in the USA. The Aruba Kitten Rescue Foundation is always on the lookout for visitors wishing to adopt kittens, cats, dogs and puppies from Aruba. The foundation's mission is to guide volunteers through the process and make it as easy as possible -- it's not difficult. So...attention people from New Jersey, if you wish to volunteer this week or next to take any of these lovely cats home to their new family, contact Yessy at 732-1433. Read more about us and other rescues on [www.facebook.com/aruba.mutts](http://www.facebook.com/aruba.mutts) and on behalf of the Aruba Kitten Rescue Foundation, donations are welcome. □



## Aramis and his friends could use your help!

**ORANJESTAD** - We would like to introduce Aramis to you, one of the donkeys that has found a home at the Aruba Donkey Sanctuary. We have never seen a donkey that was so easily accepted by the herd as Aramis. Normally it takes quite a while before the herd accepts a newcomer, but with Aramis and his friend Ninja it went without a hitch. We only separated them for one night, but one noticed that the herd was not opposed to this gorgeous, dark grey donkey. So put into the herd, and loving every moment at the Aruba Donkey Sanctuary. Aramis can look forward to staying a long, long time with us, as he is just four years old. This beautiful donkey has been provided with a chip, just like all the other donkeys. On the chip is information about the donkey and its medical history. The donkeys at

the sanctuary have a lot of friends with whom they can play all day long. And they love living there: they are well-cared for, they

the sanctuary. The volunteers are trying to cover the various costs with all kinds of activities and the sale of great

who buy something at the donkey shop or who make a donation. Thus they help support us. Everyone is welcome to

3. Entry is free of charge and one can enjoy a soft drink, a cup of coffee or a refreshing ice cream. The volunteers of the sanctuary are hoping that somebody will adopt this friendly, lovely donkey. Of course the donkey will keep on living at the sanctuary; you only need to pay AWG. 30,- per month for the donkey's keep. With this amount you help support the sanctuary as well as your own donkey. And you will receive a beautiful certificate and a super T-shirt and your name and photo will be posted on our website. So please call the sanctuary at 593-2933; you can also register via the website [www.arubandonkey.org](http://www.arubandonkey.org) or donate money on bank account number 40.03.025 at the Aruba Bank! Just do it! Would you like to follow the donkeys on Facebook: surf to Donkey Sanctuary Aruba please. □



are fed and watered and when they are sick the vet is called. Yes, they are expensive customers for

donkey memorabilia in the shop. Fortunately, there are also visitors who wish to adopt a donkey,

visit the sanctuary, which has opening hours from 9 am until 4 pm and in the weekend from 10 am until



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## SPORTS

## Aruba TODAY



## Cousins to start ahead of RG3 for Redskins

By JOSEPH WHITE

AP Sports Writer

**ASHBURN, Va. (AP)** - Mike Shanahan gave Robert Griffin III a rest, and may have turned up the pressure on himself, too.

The Redskins' coach announced Wednesday that he was benching the star quarterback for the rest of the season. Kirk Cousins will start, and Griffin will be the inactive No. 3 quarterback behind Rex Grossman.

Shanahan said he is benching Griffin to keep the quarterback healthy for the offseason, pointing out the 24 sacks and other hits Griffin has taken over the last five games. He said he ran the idea by owner Dan Snyder and general manager Bruce Allen, and that both offered their support.

"You've got to take a look at the risk and reward," Shanahan said. "And with Robert I thought that his



Washington Redskins quarterbacks Robert Griffin III, left, and Kirk Cousins, work during their NFL football practice Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013, in Ashburn, Va. Cousins will start for the Redskins on Sunday, and Griffin III will be the No. 3 quarterback behind Rex Grossman.

hits were piling up on him, giving him his toll, and I was afraid that we would set him back."

Shanahan cited the need for Griffin to have a full offseason of development after missing this year's workouts while rehabbing from knee surgery. But there's no certainty that Shanahan will be around to coach in the offseason: The Redskins have lost five straight and are 3-10, their third losing season in Shanahan's four years in Washington.

"I think anytime you have a year left on your contract and you have three wins, that's going to be out there," Shanahan said. Griffin was clearly unhappy with Shanahan's move.

"I expressed my desire to play," Griffin said. "Of course I want to be out there and finish the season with my guys, see it through."

**Continued on Page 20**

## America's Cup economic impact below projections

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** —

The America's Cup sailing races this year generated far less economic activity in the San Francisco Bay Area than projected, and have cost taxpayers more than \$5 million, according to draft figures released Tuesday.

Figures from the Bay Area Council Economic Institute reviewed by the San Francisco Chronicle show the races generated at least \$364 million in economic impact. That figure rises to \$550 million if the construction of a new cruise ship terminal is factored in.

That is far below the \$900 million projected just a few

months before the races were set to begin and the \$1.4 billion originally estimated in 2010.

Based on figures from Mayor Ed Lee's office, the races have cost city taxpayers more than \$5 million so far despite private fundraising and a boost in city tax revenue. The numbers come as Lee prepares to submit a proposal by Dec. 22 to host the next Cup. In a statement, he said the races "showcased our beautiful city to the world and brought thousands of new jobs, long-overdue legacy waterfront improvements, international visitor spending, and a boost to our re-

gional economy."

But Supervisor John Avalos said city money was better spent in outlying neighborhoods such as the one he represents, rather than its waterfront, which was spruced up for the races.

"A \$5.5 million deficit, all for a yacht race for billionaires," Avalos said. "The whole event has been nothing more than a stupefying spectacle of how this city works for the top 1 percent on everyone else's dime." The event faced numerous setbacks, including the death of Olympic gold medal-winning sailor Andrew "Bart" Simpson during a training run in May.



Oracle Team USA crosses the finish line during the 18th race of the America's Cup sailing event against Emirates Team New Zealand on Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2013, in San Francisco.

**Associated Press**

The \$100 million price tag to compete in the race whittled down the list of competitors. Simpson's death raised concerns about the safety of the race.

Still, the finish was thrilling, with defending champion Oracle Team USA coming back from an 8-1 match deficit to defeat Emirates Team New Zealand.

"While the economic boost fell short of initial expecta-

tions, it's definitely worth a modest city investment to generate hundreds of millions of dollars for our local economy," said Board of Supervisors President David Chiu. "The race ended up being pretty exciting, too." Russell Coutts, a five-time America's Cup winner who is CEO of Oracle Team USA, said it was a "very positive experience" for both the city and the event. □

## NBA Capsules

# Pacers beat the Heat to prove their worth

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Roy Hibbert scored 24 points and Paul George had 15 of his 17 points during a second-half rally to lead the Pacers past Miami 90-84 Tuesday night in a matchup of the Eastern Conference's top two teams. Indiana improved its league-best record to 19-3 and extended its lead to three full games by beating Miami at home for the fourth straight time.

LeBron James led the Heat with 17 points, 14 rebounds and six assists but had only three baskets and nine points over the final 36 minutes. Miami has now lost three of five.

The Heat led by 13 in the first half and didn't trail until Hibbert completed a three-point play with 6:12 left in the third quarter to put the Pacers ahead 58-57. But with George heating up, Hibbert dominating the middle and Indiana's bench playing solid, Miami

couldn't tie it or take the lead again.

SUNS 114, LAKERS 108

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Goran Dragic scored 31 points and Phoenix kept Los Angeles winless with Kobe Bryant back in the lineup.

Bryant led the Lakers with 20 points while playing 29 mostly sharp minutes in his second game back from a nearly eight-month absence with a torn Achilles tendon. He led a fourth-quarter rally by the Lakers, who got within four points with 3 minutes left before Phoenix held on for its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Marcus Morris scored 22 points and Eric Bledsoe had 18 points and nine assists for the surprising Suns, who never trailed after the opening minutes. Phoenix held off the Lakers with superb fourth-quarter play from both Morris brothers. Markieff Morris added 15 points.

SPURS 116, RAPTORS 103

TORONTO (AP) — Manu Ginobili scored 16 points, Tony Parker had 15 and San Antonio beat Toronto for the sixth straight time.

Tim Duncan scored 14 points and Aron Baynes had a career-best 14 as the Spurs overcame a 14-point first quarter deficit to improve to 26-9 all-time against Toronto.

San Antonio has won three of six since its 11-game winning streak was halted with a loss at Oklahoma City on Nov. 27.

Danny Green had 14 points for the Spurs, while Marco Belinelli had 12 and Patty Mills 11. DeMar DeRozan scored 19 points and Amir Johnson had 19 points and nine rebounds for the Raptors, who lost for the sixth time in seven games.

NETS 104, CELTICS 96

NEW YORK (AP) — Deron Williams scored a season-high 25 points in his return to the lineup, Brook Lopez added 24, and Brooklyn beat Boston in the first



Indiana Pacers center Roy Hibbert, left, reacts to hitting a bucket as he was fouled by Miami Heat center Chris Bosh in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Indianapolis, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013. The Pacers won 90-84.

Associated Press

matchup for Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett against their former team. Garnett had 11 points, just

his third time in double figures for the Nets this season, and grabbed nine rebounds. □

## Lindsey Vonn to skip St. Moritz, return on Dec. 21

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — Mapping out her Olympics preparation after a three-race test, Lindsey Vonn will sit out this weekend's World Cup stop at St. Moritz, Switzerland, and is planning to return to the circuit in a downhill at Val d'Isere, France, on Dec. 21. Vonn's schedule was announced Wednesday by the U.S. Ski Team.

The 29-year-old American returned to competition at Lake Louise, Alberta, last week, 10 months after tearing two ligaments in her right knee and breaking a bone in that leg during a crash at the world championships. She also had a setback when she partially re-tore one of those surgically reconstructed ligaments in a fall during practice on

Nov. 19.

Vonn finished 40th in a downhill Friday in her World Cup season debut, then 11th in another downhill Saturday, and fifth in a super-G on Sunday.

Asked after that last event what those 72 hours of racing told her, Vonn replied: "It tells me that I do need a couple more starts. I want to make sure that I get on the podium at least once, if not win, before ... Sochi. For me, mentally, I really want to have that in my back pocket."

She also indicated she did not think she needed much more in the way of World Cup work before heading to the Olympics, which start in less than two months.

"I know that I'm skiing well, so I know that I don't need



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, reacts in the finish area following her run at the women's World Cup downhill ski race in Lake Louise, Alberta, Friday, Dec. 6, 2013.

Associated Press

to push myself and try to push the limits of my knee to race as many as races as I can. ... I'm ready for Sochi," Vonn said Sunday. "I may race in one or two races, something like that." She added she wanted to limit her schedule so as

to "take the risk away from any long-term damage on my knee."

The races she'll miss at St. Moritz are a super-G and giant slalom. She's won the downhill at Val d'Isere three times — in 2005, 2006 and 2010. After that initial

victory there, Vonn was awarded a cow by local farmers.

Vonn won two medals at the 2010 Vancouver Games, including a gold in the downhill, and she is a four-time overall World Cup champion. Her 59 race wins are three shy of the World Cup career record.

Vonn explained that she would work with her coaches to figure out when to race ahead of going to Sochi.

"We take everything day to day and week to week with her and ... there won't be nearly as much volume, because the one thing we don't have to do with Lindsey is teach her how to ski," U.S. Ski Team women's speed coach Chip White said at Lake Louise. □

## Redskins

Continued from Page 18

He explained to me his reasoning, and at the end of the day Coach's decision is what we go with it."

Cousins took the first-team snaps as the team worked out in the indoor practice bubble to prepare for Sunday's game against the Atlanta Falcons. Players say Griffin ran the scout team. The benching is the latest twist in a Shanahan-Griffin relationship that has been bordering on contentious since a playoff loss to Seattle last season, when Griffin remained in the game even though he was clearly injured. Shanahan conceded for the first time Wednesday that continuing to play Griffin "cost us the game."

Griffin had reconstructive knee surgery a few days later and missed vital months of developmental work before returning for Week 1 in September, but he hasn't been the same player that



**Washington Redskins quarterbacks Kirk Cousins, left, and Robert Griffin III, center, walk behind head coach Mike Shanahan, during their NFL football practice Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013, in Ashburn, Va. Cousins will start for the Redskins on Sunday, and Griffin III will be the No. 3 quarterback behind Rex Grossman.**

12 Associated Press

won the league's Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2012. With defenses taking away the read-option, he has struggled as a drop-back passer, ranking 26th in the NFL in passer rating with 16

touchdowns and 12 interceptions.

However, while Griffin hasn't had the same explosiveness, both he and Shanahan have insisted that the quarterback is

medically healthy. Until this week, Shanahan publicly quashed any suggestions about a possible switch, saying Griffin needs as much game experience as possible.

Shanahan said Wednesday that he first brought up the idea of benching Griffin last week in a conversation with Snyder, having decided that risk of injury outweighed the reward of experience.

Both Griffin and Cousins are second-year players. Cousins played in all or part of four games, including the playoff loss, last season because of various Griffin injuries. Grossman hasn't taken a regular season snap since 2011.

In recent days, the open question has been whether Shanahan might resign - and thus forfeit a year's salary - or wait to be fired at the end of the season. There's also the possibility he and Snyder could negotiate a settlement, and that the benching of a healthy

franchise player could in some way be Shanahan's way of getting some leverage in those talks.

"Somebody said, 'Hey, the reason why you're going with Kirk is you're trying to get fired and get a year left on your contract,'" Shanahan said. "If I want to try to get fired, I'm not going to call up Dan Snyder and ask his opinion on a player (when) I don't have to. And if he says no, I'm not going to go in that direction."

But Shanahan again conceded he might not return for a fifth season.

"I don't know until I sit down with Dan," Shanahan said.

"Then we'll find out what I think. I'll give him my opinions, and he'll give me his opinions. Maybe we just hit it off and everything and I get that 12-, 15-year contract." "Well, maybe three-year," he added with a smile. "Whatever it is. That's where grown men talk at the end of the year and you find out, 'Hey, what's the best way to go.'" □

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# Ovechkin scores 4 goals, Caps beat Lightning in SO

The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Alex Ovechkin scored four goals, including the equalizer with 32.4 seconds left in regulation, and the Washington Capitals rallied to beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 6-5 in a shootout Tuesday night. NHL Capsules

Ovechkin increased his NHL-leading total to 26 goals and became Washington's career leader in power-play goals, scoring twice with the extra man to pass Peter Bondra, who had 137.

Nicklas Backstrom had a goal and four assists, and Troy Brouwer beat Tampa Bay goalie Ben Bishop in the fifth round of the shootout to provide the Capitals with their fifth win in six games.

Martin St. Louis and Tyler Johnson each had a goal and two assists for the Lightning, who squandered a three-goal lead in losing their sixth straight at Washington.

Ondrej Palat scored on a wrist shot between the circles after taking Johnson's centering pass from behind the net to put Tampa Bay up 5-4 at 8:36 of the third period.

It appeared that would hold up until Ovechkin scored from the left circle after Washington pulled goalie Philipp Grubauer.

**ISLANDERS 3, SHARKS 2, SO**  
**SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP)** — Kyle Okposo scored the tying goal with 1:37 left in regulation and got the game-winner in the fourth round of a shootout to help New York snap a 10-game losing streak with a victory over San Jose.

Thomas Vanek also scored in regulation and the shootout for the Islanders. Kevin Poulin made 46 saves and was outstanding early to keep the Islanders in the game until they broke through with two third-period goals.

Then he stopped three of four attempts in the shootout despite appearing to injure himself on a pad save against Joe Pavelski in the first round.

Patrick Marleau and Pavelski scored for the Sharks,

who blew a 2-0 lead and have lost four straight. Antti Niemi made 26 saves. New York had also lost 10 straight road games in regulation since beating Ottawa 5-4 in a shootout on Nov. 1.

**PANTHERS 3, RED WINGS 2, SO**

**SUNRISE, Fla. (AP)** — Brad Boyes scored the winning goal in a shootout to lift Florida over Detroit.

Aleksander Barkov also scored in the tiebreaker for Florida, which has won three of four overall and two in a row against the Red Wings.

Tomas Tatar scored for Detroit in the shootout but Tim Thomas stopped shots by Daniel Alfredsson and Gustav Nyquist.

Nick Bjugstad and Sean Bergenheim had goals in regulation for Florida. Thomas made 24 saves.

Pavel Datsyuk and Todd Bertuzzi scored for the Red Wings. Jimmy Howard made 25 saves and Johan Franzen had two assists. Detroit lost for the sixth time this season when leading after two periods. Florida scored twice in the third to tie the game.

**PREDATORS 4, RANGERS 1**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Nick Spaling and Rich Clune scored first-period goals, and seldom-used backup Carter Hutton made 28 saves as Nashville snapped a five-game losing streak by beating New York.

Hutton (5-3-1) made his first start since Nov. 10 and his third appearance in that span as the Predators try to get by while Pekka Rinne (hip) is out. Marek Mazanec went 0-4-1 in the previous five games.

Matt Hendricks made it 3-1 just 2:38 into the third, knocking in a loose puck from in front, with Clune earning an assist. Paul Gaustad scored an empty-net goal with 1:06 left and added two assists.

Rick Nash cut New York's deficit in half in the second period and Henrik Lundqvist stopped 22 shots, but the Rangers fell to 0-2-1 on their nine-game homestand. They have dropped four straight at Madison



**Washington Capitals right wing Alex Ovechkin, left, of Russia, celebrates his goal to tie the game, with defenseman John Carlson (74) in the third period of an NHL hockey game against the Tampa Bay Lightning, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013, in Washington. Ovechkin had four goals, and the Capitals won 6-5 in a shootout.**

Associated Press

Square Garden (0-3-1).

**SABRES 2, SENATORS 1, SO**  
**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — Zemgus Girgensons scored the tying goal in the second period and added a score in the 10th round of a shootout to lift Buffalo over Ottawa.

Ryan Miller made 35 saves for the Sabres, who snapped a three-game skid. Matt Moulson, Brian Flynn and Steve Ott also scored for Buffalo in the shootout.

With his 46th shootout win, Miller took sole possession of the record for most shootout wins in NHL history.

Milan Michalek scored Ottawa's goal and Robin Lehner made 35 saves. The Senators' shootout scorers were Mika Zibanejad, Kyle Turris and Michalek.

Buffalo is 4-0 in games decided by a shootout.

**BLUE JACKETS 5, DEVILS 4**  
**COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)** — Nick Foligno scored the game-winning goal with 91 seconds left when Ryan Johansen's shot went in off his skate, giving Columbus a victory over New Jersey. Cam Atkinson had two goals and two assists, Brandon Dubinsky had a goal

and three assists and Matt Calvert also scored for the Blue Jackets, who have won their last four at home. Damien Brunner scored twice and Travis Zajac and Michael Ryder also had goals for the Devils, who have lost four of five.

The Blue Jackets trailed 3-1 before scoring twice in 49 seconds in the second period against Martin Brodeur.

**KINGS 6, CANADIENS 0**  
**MONTREAL (AP)** — Rookie goalie Martin Jones made 31 saves for his second shutout in two games, and six Los Angeles players scored against Montreal.

Jordan Nolan, Anze Kopitar, Alec Martinez, Tyler Toffoli, Jake Muzzin and Justin Williams had the goals for the Kings, who won their fourth straight.

Carey Price made 12 saves on 16 shots for the Canadiens before being replaced by Peter Budaj, who stopped 12 of 14 shots. The loss snapped Montreal's 10-game point streak dating to Nov. 16.

**BLACKHAWKS 6, STARS 2**  
**DALLAS (AP)** — Patrick Sharp scored twice to extend his domination of Dallas and help Chicago

cruise to an easy victory. Brandon Saad also scored two goals for Chicago, which has won three of the four games between the teams. One victory was in a shootout.

Sharp has four goals and four assists against the Stars this season. In his last eight games versus Dallas, he has eight goals and seven assists.

Patrick Kane had a goal and two assists for the Blackhawks. Defenseman Michael Kostka returned after missing 24 games because of a foot injury to score Chicago's first goal. Antti Raanta made 27 saves for his fourth win.

Antoine Roussel scored twice for the Stars. Dan Ellis replaced starter Kari Lehtonen after he gave up four goals in the first 28:20.

**BLUES 2, JETS 1**

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP)** — Kevin Shattenkirk scored a power-play goal at 16:58 of the third period to give St. Louis a win over Winnipeg.

Bryan Little scored early in the third for the Jets, who outshot the Blues 8-2 in a scoreless first period.

Alex Steen turned things around in the second for St. Louis with his 21st goal of the season. Brian Elliott made 20 saves.

**COYOTES 3, AVALANCHE 1**  
**DENVER (AP)** — Antoine Vermette scored two goals, Thomas Greiss stopped 29 shots and Phoenix topped Colorado.

Jordan Szwarc also had a goal for the Coyotes, who won for the second time in five games.

Phoenix has struggled of late, going 3-5-2 in its past 10 games to slip to ninth in the Western Conference. This win pulled the Coyotes within a point of Colorado. Patrick Bordeleau scored his fourth of the season and Semyon Varlamov made 22 saves for the Avalanche, who have lost three of four.

**BRUINS 2, FLAMES 1**

**CALGARY, Alberta (AP)** — Reilly Smith scored the tie-breaking goal at 15:27 of the third period and Boston beat the Flames in Jarome Iginla's return to Calgary. □

# Major Leagues intend to ban home plate collisions

RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writer

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Florida (AP) — Major League

Baseball plans to eliminate home plate collisions, possibly as soon as next season but no later than by 2015. New York Mets general manager Sandy Alderson, chairman of the rules committee, made the announcement Wednesday at the winter meetings. Player safety and concern over concussions were major factors in the decision.

"Ultimately what we want to do is change the culture of acceptance that these plays are ordinary and routine and an accepted part of the game," Alderson said. "The costs associated in terms of health and injury just no longer warrant the status quo."

Alderson said wording of the rules change will be presented to owners for approval at their Jan. 16 meeting in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

"The exact language and how exactly the rule will be enforced is subject to final determination," he said. "We're going to do fairly extensive review of the types of plays that occur at home plate to determine which we're going to find acceptable and which are going to be prohibited." Approval of the players' union is needed for the rules change to be effective for 2014.

"If the players' association were to disapprove, then the implementation of the rule would be suspended for one year, but could be implemented unilaterally after that time," Alderson said.

The union declined comment, pending a review of the proposed change.

Former All-Star first baseman Tony Clark, who became head of the union this month, said in November: "Suffice it to say, the players have some thoughts of their own regarding home-plate collisions."

Discussion to limit or ban collisions has intensified since May 2011, when San Francisco's Buster Posey



In this Thursday, Oct. 17, 2013 file photo, Boston Red Sox's David Ross collides with Detroit Tigers catcher Alex Avila in the second inning during Game 5 of the American League baseball championship series in Detroit.

Associated Press

was injured by Florida's Scott Cousins. Posey, an All-Star catcher, sustained a broken bone in his lower left leg and three torn ligaments in his ankle, an injury that ended his season.

Posey returned to win the NL batting title and MVP award in 2012, when he led the Giants to their second World Series title in three seasons.

"This is, I think, in response to a few issues that have arisen," Alderson said. "One is just the general occurrence of injuries from these incidents at home plate that affect players, both runners and catchers. And also kind of the general concern about concussions that exists not only in baseball but throughout professional sports and amateur sports today. It's an emerging issue, and one that we in baseball have to address, as well as other sports."

Former catchers Joe Girardi, Bruce Bochy and Mike Matheny — all of them now managing in the majors — attended Wednesday's meeting.

"I think there will be two levels of enforcement of this rule," Alderson said. "One will be with respect to whether the runner is declared safe or out based on conduct. So, for exam-

considered blocking the plate and how do you define all of it?"

U.S. college sports governing body the NCAA instituted a rule on collisions for the 2011 season, saying "contact above the waist that was initiated by the base runner shall not be judged as an attempt to reach the base or plate." The umpire can call the runner out and can eject the player if contact is determined to be malicious or flagrant.

"The actual detail, frankly the kinds of plays that we're trying to eliminate, we haven't finely determined," Alderson said. "I would expect to put together 100 of these plays and identify which ones we want to continue to allow and others that we want



In this July 14, 1970 file photo, Cincinnati Reds' Pete Rose (14) slams into Cleveland Indians' catcher Ray Fosse to score a controversial game-winning run for the National League team in the 12th inning of the 1970 All-Star game in Cincinnati. Fosse suffered a fractured shoulder in the collision. Looking on are the Reds' third base coach Leo Durocher, and Cincinnati Reds' next hitter Dick Dietz (2).

Associated Press

ple, intentionally running over the catcher might result in an out call. So I think that the enforcement will be on the field as well as subsequent consequences in the form of fines and suspensions and the like." But drafting the rule figures to be complicated. "Does it include at every base or just home plate?"

Baltimore manager Buck Showalter said. "What's

to prohibit, and draft a rule accordingly." □



# AP-GfK poll: strong opposition to in-flight calls

SCOTT MAYEROWITZ

AP Airlines Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — As federal regulators consider removing a decades-old prohibition on making phone calls on planes, a majority of Americans who fly oppose such a change, a new Associated Press-GfK poll finds.

The Federal Communications Commission will officially start the debate Thursday, holding the first of several meetings to review the agency's 22-year-old ban. New FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler has called the current rules "outdated and restrictive."

Technology has advanced to the point where in-flight calls — relayed first through a special system on planes — won't overload cell towers on the ground. As a result, Wheeler has said, there's no reason the government should prohibit in-flight calls. The FCC proposal comes weeks after the Federal Aviation Administration lifted its ban on using personal electronic devices such as iPads and Kindles below 10,000 feet (3,000 meters), saying they don't interfere with cockpit instruments.

Just because technology has advanced, it doesn't mean that etiquette has. Many fliers fear their fellow passengers will subject them to long-winded conversations impossible to avoid at 35,000 feet (10,700 meters). The Associated Press-GfK poll released Wednesday finds that 48 percent of Americans oppose allowing cellphones to be used for voice calls while flying; just 19 percent support it. Another 30 percent are neutral.

Among those who fly, opposition is stronger. Looking just at Americans who have taken more than one flight in the past year, 59 percent are against allowing calls on planes. That number grows to 78 percent among those who've taken four or more flights.

Interestingly, you can count Wheeler in the opposition. "We understand that many passengers would prefer that voice calls not be made on airplanes. I feel that way myself," he said in a Nov. 22 statement.

The chairman went on to say that his intention is for the airlines — not the government — to make the decision whether or not to



In this Oct. 29, 2012, file photo, a traveler on Delta Airlines waits for her flight in Detroit. As federal regulators consider removing a decades-old prohibition on making phone calls on planes, a majority of air travelers oppose such a change, a new Associated Press poll finds on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013. Associated Press

allow calls.

Delta Air Lines is the only airline to explicitly state that it won't allow voice calls. Delta says years of feedback from customers show "the overwhelming sentiment" is to keep the ban in place. American Airlines, United Airlines and JetBlue Airways all plan to study the issue and listen to feedback from passengers and crew. The nation's largest flight attendant union opposes a change, saying cellphone use could lead to fights between passengers.

on planes sounds like the premise of a new reality show: 'Cage Fighting at 30,000 Feet.'"

Separately, House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster plans to introduce a bill prohibiting such calls.

"If passengers are going to be forced to listen to the gossip in the aisle seat, it's going to make for a very long flight," Shuster said in a statement.

In contrast to the negative sentiment about phone calls, many take a favorable view of the lifting of the ban on personal electronic devices. The poll shows that 43 percent of Americans support the FAA's move, while 19 percent oppose it. Another 37 percent are neutral. Among frequent fliers, support rises to 69 percent.

The AP-GfK Poll was conducted Dec. 5-9, 2013 using KnowledgePanel, GfK's probability-based online panel. For results based on all 1,367 adults, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. It is 5.4 points for results among 560 people who have taken at least one flight in the last year. □

# Dutch bus drivers to test fatigue warning tech

TOBY STERLING

Associated Press

**AMSTERDAM (AP)** — A Dutch luxury bus company is testing technology that monitors whether a driver is becoming drowsy. Royal Beuk BV said Tuesday it is outfitting 20 vehicles from six different charter vacation bus lines with a system designed by Australian company Seeing Machines.

It uses infrared light and a camera to register eye movements to see whether a driver's gaze is distracted from the road for too long, or if he is blinking progressively more slowly — signs he may be close to nod-

ding off.

If the system's software algorithms determine there's a problem, it will first sound an alarm for the driver. Further alarms will pull in human assistance or intervention.

"What we see is that drivers learn very quickly not to be distracted from the road," Ken Kroeger, the CEO of Seeing Machines, said in a telephone interview. "However, you can't train someone to not be tired."

Other technologies with a similar goal are on the market.

Mercedes and Volvo have both introduced automobile systems that measure

drowsiness by analyzing steering wheel movements, while Ford uses cameras to check whether a car is drifting out of its lane.

Cheaper solutions include ear-mounted devices that sound an alarm if a head has fallen forward, and a variety of smartphone apps that try to predict sleepiness or just keep a sleepy driver awake.

After completing trials during this winter and next summer's holiday seasons, Beuk will act as European distributor for Seeing Machines. Canberra-based Seeing Machines has previously signed deals with Cater-



In this handout photo provided by Royal Beuk BV in Noordwijk, Netherlands on Tuesday Dec. 10, 2013 an engineer outfits a bus with a fatigue monitoring system.

Associated Press

pillar and BHP Billiton. The industrial version of the systems cost up to \$20,000 each — in vehicles that can cost more than a million. The slimmed-down

version going into the buses will cost less than \$5,000, and the company hopes eventually to market them to the trucking industry as well. □

## Stocks slump following disappointing earnings

STEVE ROTHWELL  
AP Markets Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Disappointing earnings from a handful of U.S. companies pushed the stock market to its biggest loss in five weeks. Health care stocks had some of the biggest de-

reporting earnings that fell short of Wall Street forecasts. The broader stock market also fell. The Standard & Poor's 500 index has fallen six out of eight days in December, leaving it down 1.3 percent for the month.

percent so far in 2013, putting it on track for its biggest annual increase in a decade. "Anybody who thinks that it's up forever is certainly a neophyte to this business," said Bertelsen.

Another sign that investors'

sell 2000 has outpaced other big indexes.

Investors also considered the impact of the latest budget deal in Washington, which will help lawmakers avoid the immediate threat of another government shutdown. The 16-day shutdown in October crimped economic growth and hurt consumer confidence.

In the long run, the deal should be good for the stock market. It will allow investors to focus on the economy and the outlook for corporations rather than politics, said Peter Sidoti, a former Wall Street analyst who now runs a company that focuses on analyzing small-company stocks. "It just gets rid of the noise," said Sidoti, head of Sidoti & Co. "The less distractions that you have and the more that you have people focus on running their businesses, the better off we are."

The S&P 500 index fell 20.40 points, or 1.2 percent, to 1,782.22. It was the biggest decline for the index since Nov. 7.

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 129.60 points, or 0.8 percent, to 15,843.53.

The Nasdaq composite fell 56.68 points, or 1.4 percent, to 4,003.81.

Health care stocks slid 1.6 percent. □



Trader Michael Urkonis, left, and specialist Frank Masiello work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

clines. Laboratory Corporation of America slumped after cutting its full-year earnings forecast. Quest Diagnostics, a major competitor, also dropped. Joy Global, a maker of mining equipment, sank after

The market may be succumbing to "buyer's fatigue" after a big rally this year, said Chris Bertelsen, chief investment officer at Global Financial Private Capital. The S&P 500 has surged 25

optimism about stocks may be flagging was a sharp drop in the Russell 2000. The index of small-company stocks fell 1.6 percent Wednesday, the most in month. Still, this year's 30-percent gain in the Rus-

## Czech brewer gets Budweiser trademark in Portugal

**PRAGUE (AP)** — The Czech brewery Budvar said Wednesday that a Portuguese trade court has upheld a decision prohibiting its rival, Anheuser-Busch InBev, from selling beer under the Budweiser name in the country.

State-owned Budvar has been fighting with Anheuser-Busch for over a century over use of the Budweiser brand name. The legal battle continued when Anheuser-Busch was taken over by Belgium's InBev in 2008 to create the world's largest brewer.

In a statement, the Czech company — whose full name is Budejovicky Bud-

var NP — said the court in Lisbon rejected AB InBev's challenge to an earlier ruling because its Budweiser trademarks could be mistaken for those Budvar had already registered in Portugal.

AB InBev has an option to appeal but has not yet said if it plans to do so.

Spokeswoman Karen Couck said in an emailed statement to the Associated Press that the ruling has not affected AB InBev's sales of its beer "under the established BUD brand in Portugal, as we have been doing for years without challenge or interruption from Budvar." □



The Budejovicky Budvar brewery, in Ceske Budejovice, Czech Republic.

(AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

## Gannett to add USA Today bites to local papers

CHRISTINE HAUGHNEY

© 2013 New York Times

Gannett Co., one of the nation's largest newspaper chains, will try to expand its advertising and circulation revenue by inserting parts of its flagship newspaper, USA Today, into its local newspapers.

The company announced its plans Wednesday morning at the UBS Global Media and Communications Conference.

Beginning in January, Gannett will add 12 to 14 pages of USA Today content each day to 35 newspapers in its largest markets, including The Journal News in White Plains, N.Y., The Tennessean in Nashville and The Cincinnati Enquirer. That means readers, along with their local news, will get a broader mix of news from the USA Today content.

Gannett has been testing the program at four papers - in Indianapolis; Rochester, N.Y.; Fort Myers, Fla.; and Appleton, Wis. - since October and plans to add the new markets throughout the first quarter of 2014. Eventually it plans to extend the program to all of its 81 local newspaper markets. The plan represents a major move for Gannett, which experienced a deep dip in third-quarter advertising revenue this year compared with 2012, when it benefited from advertising associated with the Olympics and the presidential election season.

By incorporating USA Today into local papers, Gannett is able to increase the national paper's circulation by roughly 1.5 million readers during the week and 2.5 million readers Sundays, and then try to sell advertising against these larger numbers.

According to the Alliance for Audited Media, USA Today has 2.876 million weekday readers for both the print and digital editions, with just over 1.3 million of those for the printed paper. □

## EURO BRIEFS

## Zara profits slim despite expansions

**MADRID (AP)** — Spanish fashion retailer Inditex, which owns Zara stores, says its profits barely rose in the first nine months of the year despite a solid sales increase and a further expansion worldwide. Inditex said Wednesday its net profit from February through October rose 1 percent to 1.67 billion (\$2.3 billion) compared to the same period in 2012. Sales, meanwhile, swelled 5 percent to 11.93 billion euros. The group said it opened 240 new stores, taking the total to 6,249 shops.

It created 8,000 jobs to bring its workforce to 124,880. Founded in 1975 by Amancio Ortega, Inditex operates eight brands including Massimo Dutti, Bershka, Pull & Bear and Oysho. Inditex's shares were up 0.4 percent at 114.70 euros in morning trading in Madrid. □

## Moncler bets shows strong IPO appetites

**MILAN (AP)** — The Italian luxury down jacket maker Moncler says investors sought more than 31 times the stock offered in its initial public offering. Moncler said in a statement Wednesday that the company's market capitalization based on the final price of 10.20 euros (\$14.06) is euros 2.5 billion euros (\$3.44 billion).

The share sale indicated renewed investor appetite in Europe, with institutional investors allotted 90 percent of the shares on offer, making orders for more than 20 billion euros.

Moncler shares are set to begin trading on Monday. It floated about 27 percent of its shares for a partial buyout of strategic funds. Chairman and creative director Remo Ruffini retains his 31.9 percent stake. □

## Wal-Mart names new head of international operations

ELIZABETH A. HARRIS

© 2013 New York Times

Two weeks after naming a new chief executive, Wal-Mart announced Tuesday that David Cheesewright, president of several overseas divisions, would soon take on all of the company's international operations.

In a statement, Doug McMillon, who is leaving the international post to become the top executive, said of Cheesewright: "We have strengthened our business and gained market share in the majority of our international markets, and he had a key role in that success."

Like McMillon, Cheesewright has been with the company for many years. He began his career at Wal-Mart in 1999.

"He does seem like a very natural candidate," said Faye Landes, an analyst at Cowen and Co. "He's their one-man SWAT team. He's been sent to work on a lot of very important international missions, and he's been successful."

Wal-Mart has already begun to adjust its international strategy.

In October, the company announced that it would close about 50 underperforming stores in China and Brazil, delay indefinitely its plan to open hundreds of superstores across India and reduce by a third the 20 million to 22 million square feet of retail space it had wanted to add internationally. That same month, the company said it would accelerate development in China, adding

as many as 110 facilities.

Cheesewright, 51, has been in charge of operations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and Canada. As chief executive of Wal-Mart Canada, he oversaw adding the company's supercenters to the country. He helped develop and expand online grocery delivery at Asda, Wal-Mart's operations in Britain. And he serves on the board of Wal-Mart's e-commerce business in China, Yihaodian.

"He's been very capable in different geographies," Landes said. "In a global company, you really want that." Before Wal-Mart, Cheesewright worked at Mars Confectionery. He joined Wal-Mart's British operations in 1999.

Cheesewright will start in his

new position at the beginning of February, the same time McMillon will replace Michael T. Duke, 64, who has been Wal-Mart's chief executive since 2009.

"I'm honored to be named to lead our international business at a time when our customers around the world need us more than ever," Cheesewright said in a statement.

In the meantime, Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the United States, is barreling through a competitive holiday season, trying to snare every available customer with promotions blazing. On Friday, Wal-Mart will bring back "Black Friday-like prices" on items including an iPad mini and Monster headphones, and it will keep those prices in place through Christmas Eve. □

## GM to stop making cars in Australia by 2017

ROD McGUIRK

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)

— General Motors Co. said Wednesday it will stop making cars and engines in Australia by the end of 2017, with nearly 2,900 jobs to be lost, because of high production costs and competition. The decision could spell the end of car manufacturing in Australia as the industry will be too small for supporting businesses such as parts makers to remain economic. Toyota Motor Corp. announced it is reassessing its future in Australia. A union said 50,000 jobs in the auto industry are in jeopardy.

GM's Australian subsidiary Holden once dominated Australian auto sales, but lost market share to imported cars. Ford Motor Co., once Holden's major rival in Australia, announced in May that it was ending production in the country in 2016. Toyota is the only other auto manufacturer in Australia.

Australia had four car manufacturers before Mitsubishi Motors Corp. shut its doors in 2008.

GM's announcement has been anticipated for months. The Australian government has been un-



A Holden Cruze hatch is manufactured at a plant in Australia. General Motors Co. said Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013 it will stop making cars and engines in Australia by the end of 2017, with nearly 2,900 jobs to be lost, because of high production costs and competition. GM's Australian subsidiary Holden once dominated Australian auto sales, but lost market share to imported cars.

(AP Photo/General Motors)

der mounting pressure to offer increased subsidies to the Detroit-based company to keep it manufacturing in Australia for the sake of the auto parts industry. The decision reflected the "perfect storm of negative influences" that Australia's auto industry faces, GM's chief executive Dan Akerson said in a statement. Describing Australia as "arguably the most competi-

tive and fragmented auto market in the world," he also blamed the sustained strength of the Australian dollar, high costs of production, and a small population. Holden, which has manufactured cars in Australia for 65 years, would become a sales company, he said.

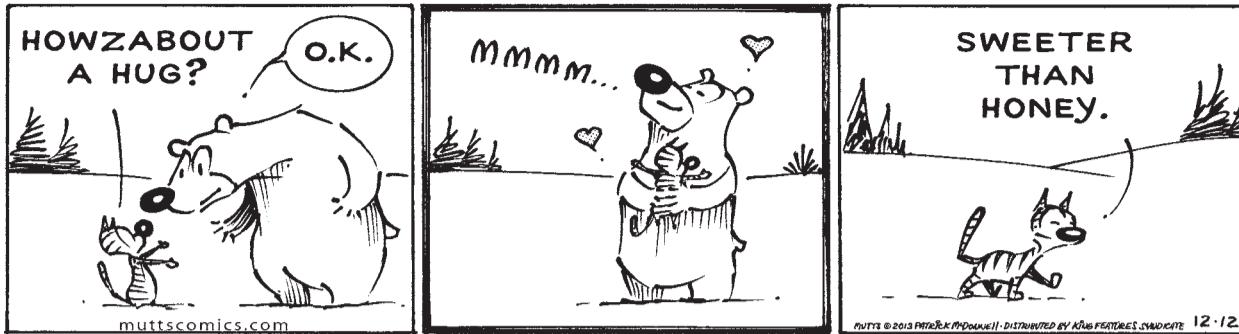
The announcement was made the same day GM revealed that Akerson will

be replaced by Mary Barra on Jan. 15.

GM's Australia chairman Mike Devereux said GM cars rebadged as Holdens would continue to be sold and serviced in Australia after 2017.

GM is currently selling the Australia-built Chevrolet SS in the United States. The 6.2-liter V-8 muscle car is called the Holden VF Commodore in Australia. □

## Mutts



## 6 Chix



## Blondie

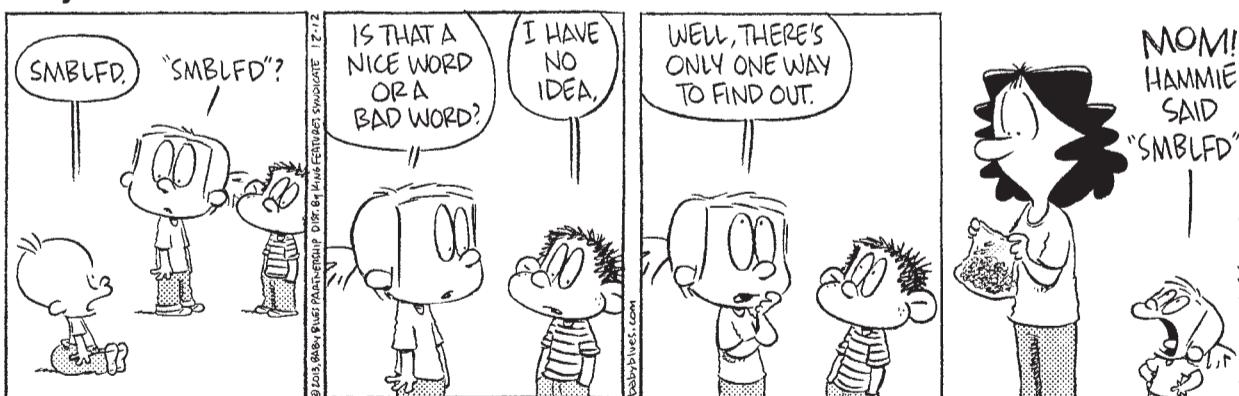


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**Mother Goose & Grimm**



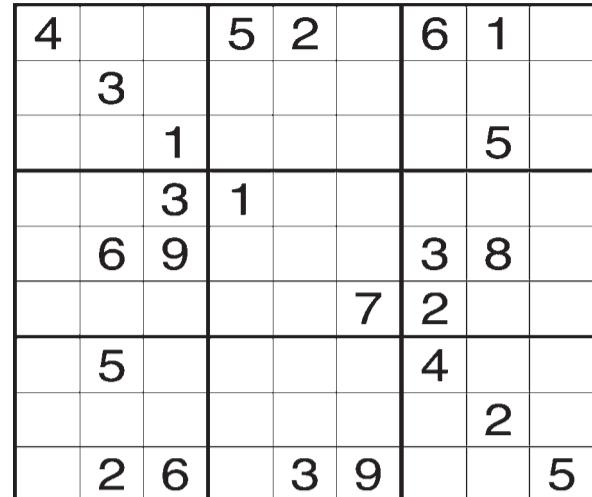
## Baby Blues



## Zits



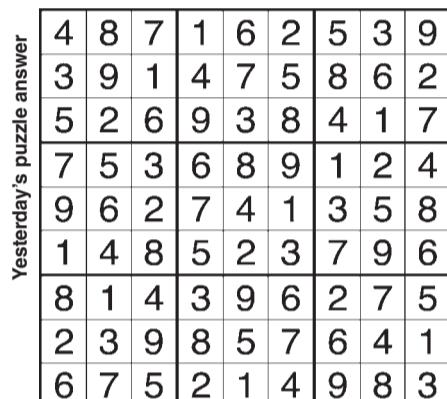
# Conceptis Sudoku



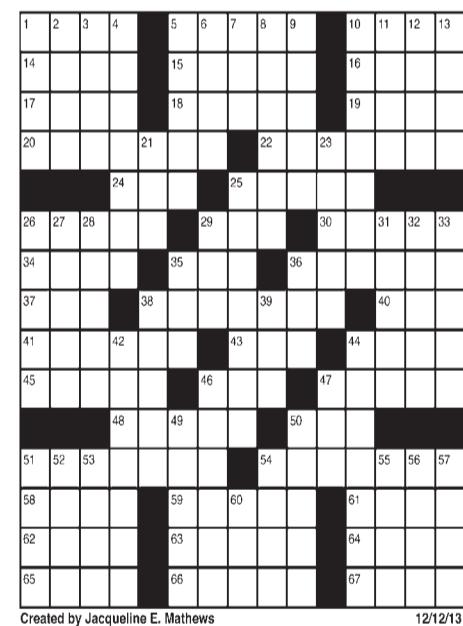
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12/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.



Yesterday's puzzle answer



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

## Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



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## For women, cuts with the guys save cash



Katie Armour, editorial director of a digital magazine, has her short hair style trimmed by Hugo Hernandez at Fellow Barber in New York, Dec. 4, 2013. Many women are choosing the more affordable, less fussy atmosphere of a barbershop over the traditional salon experience.

(Deidre Schoo/The New York Times)

## LAUREN SHERMAN

© 2013 New York Times

**NEW YORK** - Like many women in New York, Katie Armour, editorial director of the digital magazine Matchbook, is absolutely devoted to her hairdresser. "He's so wonderful, I know all about his family," said Armour, 27, who travels from her apartment on the Upper East Side to the West Village once a month to get her hair done.

But unlike most of her friends, Armour visits a branch of Fellow Barber (formerly the Freemans Sporting Club barbershops) rather than a salon. Cut by Hugo Hernandez, 68, for \$40 plus tip, her closely cropped pixie is inspired by the actress Jean Seberg in the 1960 Jean-Luc Godard film "Breathless." There is no shampooing involved, and very little styling; just a little spritz and comb. And that's exactly how she likes it.

"My hair is very short," Armour said, "shorter than

the hair of the man I'm seeing right now." Some of her male friends in the city went to Fellow Barber and had cool haircuts, she said, so it made sense to try it. "They do a good job, and it's half the price of what I used to pay."

Amour is just one of many New York women in recent years to choose the more affordable, less fussy atmosphere of a barbershop over the traditional salon experience. This isn't entirely new. The 66-year-old institution Astor Place Hair-stylists offers cuts starting at

\$16 as well as more extravagant treatments, including keratin straightening and color. And Rudy's, the kitschy barbershop chain founded in Seattle in 1993, which now has locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn, has always welcomed both sexes.

But according to barbershop proprietors, the number of female clients is growing. When Sam Buffa, the owner of Fellow Barber, opened his first location on the Lower East Side in 2006, only 2 to 3 percent of the clientele were women, he said; now, approximately 7 percent of the clientele in New York is female, and at Fellow Barber's San Francisco location, it's closer to 9 percent.

After seven years of "Real Housewife" barrel curls, close crops including shaved undercuts à la Michelle Williams as well as traditional pixies (most recently adopted by the fashion blogger Garance Doré, the actress Emma Watson and even the former blond bombshell Pamela Anderson) may also be spurring female interest in this typically male setting. "A hairdresser at a salon is probably not going to know how to do an undercut," Buffa said, although he added that his barbers were happy to do more classic women's cuts as well.

At Decatur & Sons, the Chelsea Market barbershop opened in March by Thorin Decatur, an alumnus of Fellow Barber, tourists seeking graduated layers and Alexa Chung-bobs are turned away.

But women still make up around 10 percent of the business. □



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# Alan Alda's science contest asks: What is color?

**FRANK ELTMAN**  
Associated Press

**MINEOLA, New York (AP)**

— Alan Alda, the actor-turned-part-time professor, has a new question for scientists to consider: How do you explain color to an 11-year-old?

The television and film star best known for his role in the 1970s TV comedy "MASH," is posing the question as part of the third annual "Flame Challenge." Alda helped organize the international contest as part of his work at the Stony Brook University Center for Communicating Science. The university on eastern Long Island named the center in Alda's honor earlier this year; its goal is to get scientists in various disciplines to explain complex concepts in the simplest of ways.

This year's question was selected by Alda after receiving about 800 suggested questions from children. He explained that many question focused on issues

about light and color, including the childhood classic: "Why is the sky blue?"

"I'm in awe of the scientists who can bring clarity to these questions and I'm in awe of the kids who keep the scientists on their toes," Alda said.

Alda, a New York native who has had a lifelong interest in science, started the contest in 2011 by asking scientists:

What is a flame? He followed that up last year with: What is time?

Now comes color.

"We want scientists to think about how they can answer the question from their own field — from biology to physics to anthropology or psychology," said Elizabeth Bass, director of the Alda Center.

Bass said the answer can be explained from a variety of scientific perspectives, including physics, chemistry, or psychology. Scientists have a March 1, 2014, deadline to submit their responses, which



In this April 26, 2013 file photo, actor and sometimes science professor Alan Alda speaks during an interview on the campus of Stony Brook University, on New York's Long Island.

Associated Press

will then be judged by 11-year-olds logging onto the Flame Challenge website. Last year, 20,000 students around the world served as judges.

Two winners — one a written entry and the second for a video or graphic entry — will receive a free trip to New York City, where they will meet Alda and be honored at the World Science Festival. □



In this Thursday night Dec. 13, 2012 file photo, a meteor streaks across the sky during the annual Geminid meteor shower over Springville, Ala.

Associated Press

## Geminid meteor shower ramps up Friday night

**MARCI DUNN**

AP Aerospace Writer

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP)**

— The annual Geminids meteor shower — the most intense of the year — will peak Friday night.

But the best viewing may be early Saturday, once the moon sets. Between 100 and 120 meteors are expected every hour at peak time. But scientists

say the bright moon will interfere and reduce the number of visible meteors by half. That's why the best shot for viewing will be closer to dawn on Saturday.

The Geminids come from a small asteroid named 3200 Phaethon, which passes quite close to the sun. Its trail of dust and debris is what makes up the Geminids. □

## Comet ISON pronounced dead: Sun is chief suspect

**SETH BORENSTEIN**

AP Science Writer

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Comet ISON, once optimistically called the comet of the century, is dead, the victim of a way-too-close brush with the sun.

It was barely a year old. The comet, which excited astronomers and the media as it zipped within 730,000 miles of the sun on Thanksgiving Day, was pronounced dead at a scientific conference Tuesday. Astronomers who had followed the ice ball mourned the loss of the sky show that once promised to light up during December.

Naval Research Lab astronomer Karl Battams, who headed the observing campaign for the comet, said ISON (EYE'-sahn) was stretched and pulled by the sun's powerful gravity. It was also hit with solar ra-

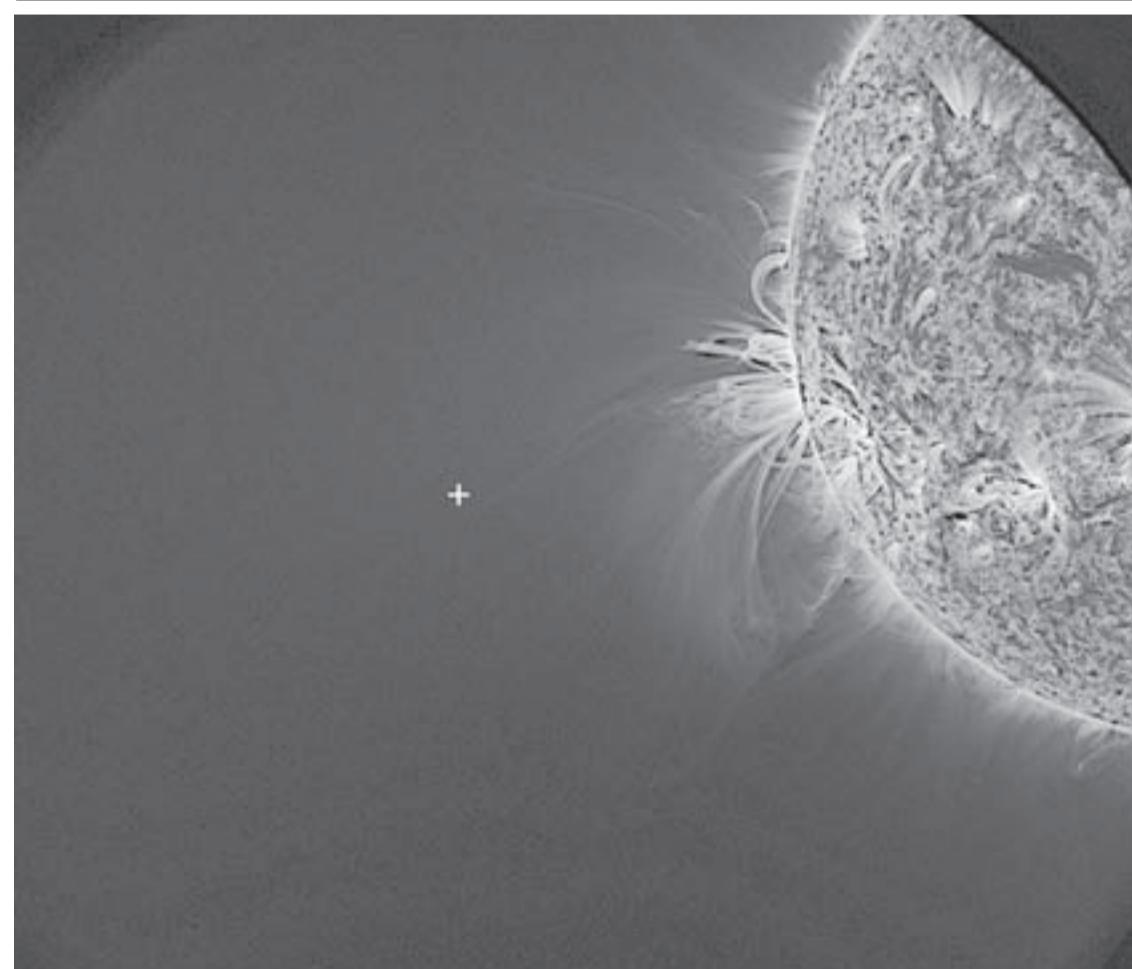
diation.

And the icy snowball just fell apart.

"At this point it seems like there is nothing left," Battams said at the American Geophysical Union conference in San Francisco. "Sorry, everyone, Comet ISON is dead. But its memory will live on."

Astronomers had hoped it would survive because some — but not most — comets make it past close approaches with the sun. Last year Comet Lovejoy did.

Had ISON survived it would have provided good naked-eye viewing in early December for the Northern Hemisphere, astronomers said. NASA had aimed several telescopes and spacecraft at the comet to watch its close brush with the sun, only to find it missing after the encounter. □



This image provided by NASA and taken by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory on Nov. 28, 2013, shows the sun, but no sign of comet ISON. During a meeting of the American Geophysical Union meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013, scientists said the comet broke apart on Thanksgiving after coming close to the sun.

Associated Press

# '12 Years a Slave' tops SAG Awards with 4 noms

JESSICA HERNDON

AP Film Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Steve McQueen's historic saga "12 Years a Slave" topped the nominations list for the 20th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards Wednesday, cementing it as a solid Academy Awards prospect with four nominations. John Wells' dysfunctional family adaptation "August: Osage County," which hits theaters Dec. 25 and features an all-star cast including Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts, also picked up awards-season momentum with three nominations, including outstanding performance for the cast.

The SAG nominations are one of Hollywood's first major announcements on the long road to the March 2 Oscars. Also key are the Golden Globe nominations, which will be revealed Thursday morning. Noticeably absent from Wednesday's SAG lineup were Spike Jonze's futuristic computer love story "Her," starring Joaquin Phoenix; Ethan and Joel Coen's folk scene-focused dark comedy "Inside Llewyn Davis"; Richard Linklater's raw and romantic "Before Midnight"; and Martin Scorsese's stockbroker story "The Wolf of Wall Street," which features performances by Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonah Hill.

Robert Redford, as a resourceful sailor in "All is Lost," was also snubbed, as was Ryan Coogler's numbing injustice tale "Fruitvale Station" and the film's lead actor, Michael B. Jordan. Joining the SAG list for outstanding cast performance were Jean-Marc Vallee's AIDS drama "Dallas Buyers Club" and the sweeping White House servant tale "Lee Daniels' The Butler." Both films topped the list with three nominations each.

Also nominated for cast performance was David O. Russell's 1970s con-artist romp "American Hustle." And the film scored an individual supporting nomination for Jennifer Lawrence.



British Director Steve McQueen, left, Kenyan actress Lupita Nyong'o, center, and British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor arrive at the French Premiere of "12 Years A Slave" on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013 in Paris. **Associated Press**

In addition to its cast honors, "12 Years a Slave" attained individual acting nominations, including male lead for Chiwetel Ejiofor as a free African-American man who is kidnapped and sold into slavery, Michael Fassbender for supporting actor as a ruthless slave owner and Lupita Nyong'o for female support as a favored field-worker.

"Osage County" had individual nominations for Streep for female lead as the conflicted matriarch in the adaptation of Tracy Letts' Pulitzer Prize and Tony-winning play, and Roberts for supporting female actor as the domineering daughter.

Additional best-actress nominees included Cate Blanchett as a fallen socialite in Woody Allen's "Blue Jasmine," Sandra Bullock as a brave astronaut in Alfonso Cuarón's lost-in-space odyssey "Gravity,"

Judi Dench as a woman in search of her son in "Philomena" and Emma Thompson as author P.L. Travers in the Disney comedy "Saving Mr. Banks."

June Squibb, as a spitfire in Alexander Payne's small-town comedy "Nebraska," and Oprah Winfrey, as the bold Gloria Gaines in "The Butler," also received supporting role nominations. "Dallas Buyers Club" scored nominations for best actor for Matthew McConaughey as a HIV-positive rodeo-lover and Jared Leto for supporting actor as a transgender. Forest Whitaker received the lead actor nomination for his portrayal of a long-time White House butler in "Lee Daniels' The Butler."

Others bringing in lead-actor nominations included Bruce Dern for his portrayal of an aging dreamer in "Nebraska" and Tom Hanks, who plays the title role in Paul Greengrass' So-

mali pirate story.

Ron Howard's Formula One tale "Rush" earned two nominations, including stunt ensemble and a supporting actor bid for Daniel Bruhl.

Among TV ensemble contenders were HBO's "Boardwalk Empire" and "Game of Thrones," AMC's "Breaking Bad," PBS's "Downton Abbey" and Showtime's "Homeland" for drama, and NBC's "30 Rock," Net-

flix's "Arrested Development," CBS's "The Big Bang Theory," ABC's "Modern Family" and HBO's "Veep" in the comedy category.

"New Girl" star Zooey Deschanel, Mindy Kaling of "The Mindy Project" and "Louie" creator and star Louis C.K. were all snubbed on nominations in the comedy field.

The SAG Awards will be presented Jan. 18 in Los Angeles. □

## 4 new Matildas set to take the Broadway stage



This undated image released by Boneau/Bryan-Brown shows actress Ava Ulloa. Ulloa, along with Ripley Sobo, Gabriella Pizzolo, and Paige Brady, pictured right, have joined the Broadway company of "Matilda The Musical" and will begin performances in the title role over the course of the next few weeks.

**Associated Press**

MARK KENNEDY

AP Drama Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A fresh batch of Matildas are en route to Broadway.

Producers of the hit British import "Matilda the Musical" have tapped Paige Brady, Gabriella Pizzolo, Ripley Sobo, and Ava Ulloa as the next group who will rotate playing the telekinetic heroine at the Shubert Theatre.

The four will replace Sophia Gennusa, Oona Laurence, Bailey Ryon and Milly Shapiro, who all received Tony Honors for Excellence in the Theatre, a non-competitive commendation. The transition will hopefully be done by the end of January.

Ten-year-old Paige, from the Philadelphia area, is making her Broadway debut, as is 10-year-old Gabriella, from upstate New

York, and 9-year-old New York City native Ava. Ten-year-old Ripley, also from upstate New York, made her Broadway debut in "Once."

"Matilda," which opened in April, is a witty musical adaptation of the beloved novel by Roald Dahl and is true to his bleak vision of childhood as a savage battleground.

The musical tells the story of a precocious and slightly telekinetic Matilda Wormwood, an English girl who loves to read despite the disdain of her sleazy parents. She is befriended by a kindly teacher but opposed by the fearsome school headmistress.

The use of four rotating Matildas in New York echoes the way it was done in Britain, to huge success. □

## 6 geezers laying? Holidays bring on song botches



This Dec. 4, 2013 file photo shows the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree in New York. It's that time of year: holiday music time. And with holiday music comes all the strange and twisted things we sometimes think we're hearing. Mondegreens, the moniker for misheard words in song, aren't restricted to holiday standards, of course, but the old-timey language of some seems to serve as a botched-lyric magnet.

Associated Press

LEANNE ITALIE

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Milk and spiders? Nine lazy Hansons? Sleep in heavenly peas?

It's that time of year: holiday music time. And with holiday music comes all the strange and twisted things we sometimes think we're hearing. Mondegreens, the moniker for misheard words in song, aren't restricted to holiday standards, of course, but the old-timey language of some seems to serve as a botched-lyric magnet. Lest you think funny turns on song lyrics are the stuff of childhoods, Missy O'Reilly knows other-

wise. She's an actress, comedian and co-owner of Planet Rose, a karaoke haven on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

"I'm the biggest Christmas nerd, so I'm always encouraging people to sing Christmas music," she said. "Some people are really surprised when they see what the real words are."

Look no further than Snopes.com for handy examples submitted by readers of the website that collects and debunks urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors and misinformation. Noting that mondegreens aren't parody, but words

we actually think we're listening to, Snopes keeps a list of holiday gems.

For "The Twelve Days of Christmas," there's "Ten lawyers leaving" and "Nine lazy Hansons." Later we've got "Six geezers laying," along with "a paltry tin-affair tree." Those are in lieu of lords a-leaping, ladies dancing, geese a-laying and the obligatory partridge in a pear tree, fyi. If ever you've made it to the fourth verse of "Winter Wonderland," you'll be relieved to know it doesn't include "Later on milk and spiders, as we dream by the fire," but rather: "Later

on we'll conspire ..." And that snowman you may or may not build in the meadow? You should pretend he's "Parson Brown," not "sparse and brown," or "parched and brown." Just sayin'. There are most definitely no "peas" in "Silent Night," but "heavenly peace." In "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," the big guy in red does this: "making a list, checkin' it twice." Not this: "making a list, of chicken and rice." Sometimes, O'Reilly said, an entire holiday song is one big what?! She was thinking of the haunting yet beautiful — to the ears of some

critics — "Fairytale of New York," co-written by Shane MacGowen of the Celtic punk group The Pogues. An Irish immigrant recalling a Christmas Eve stay in a New York City drunk tank tells of an inebriated older cellmate whose rendition of a traditional ballad spins the thickly brogued narrator (MacGowen) into a raunchy imagining of a debauched life with the old ditty's female character.

"It's a beautiful, beautiful song but people are always confused by what the words are," O'Reilly said. "It's really hard to decipher the words." □

## 17-city tour to mark Newport Jazz Festival's 60th

**NEWPORT, Rhode Island (AP)** — The Newport Jazz Festival is kicking off its 60th anniversary with a 17-city U.S. tour.

The concerts in February and March will feature an ensemble of jazz artists picked by festival creator George Wein (ween). They include clarinetist-saxophonist Anat Cohen, vocalist-pianist Karrin Allyson, bassists Larry Grenadier and Ben Allison, among others. □

In this Aug. 2, 2013 file photo, George Wein, Newport Jazz Festival founder and producer, listens to Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter perform at the festival in Newport, R.I. The festival will expand to three full days of performances in 2014 to celebrate its 60th anniversary.



## Can't We Do Better?



THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN  
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The latest results in the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, which compare how well 15-year-olds in 65 cities and countries can apply math, science and reading skills to solve real-world problems were released last week, and it wasn't pretty for the home team. Andreas Schleicher, who manages PISA, told the Department of Education: "Three years ago, I came here with a special report benchmarking the U.S. against some of the best performing and rapidly improving education systems. Most of them have pulled further ahead, whether it is Brazil that advanced from the bottom, Germany and Poland that moved from adequate to good, or Shanghai and Singapore that moved from good to great. The math results of top-performer Shanghai are now 2 1/2 school years ahead even of those in Massachusetts - itself a leader within the U.S."

Not good. We're now in an era in which globalization and the information technology revolution have merged to drastically shrink what was the basis of our middle class for so many years: the "high-wage, middle-skilled" job. In a less integrated and less automated world of walls, where unions held more sway, many Americans could live an average middle-class lifestyle with average skills. In today's hyperconnected world without walls - when more Indians, Chinese, computers, robots and software can perform more average blue-collar and white-collar jobs - the only high-wage jobs are increasingly high-skill jobs.

"Over the last decade, job growth in the industrialized world has almost exclusively been at the top end of the PISA skill distribution," explained Schleicher, "while routine cognitive skills, the kinds of things that are easy to teach but also easy to digitize and outsource, have seen the steepest decline in demand."

President Barack Obama noted last week that this was one reason that the top 10 percent in America now takes home half of our national income, up from one-third in 1979. One response is to raise the minimum wage and provide national health care. I hope both work, but neither will solve the problem. "Since the link between skills, jobs and growth is becoming ever tighter, it will be harder and harder for governments to address inequalities through redistribution," argues Schleicher.

To his credit, Obama has also been calling for more investment in preschool, tech-ed and affordable colleges, but Republicans

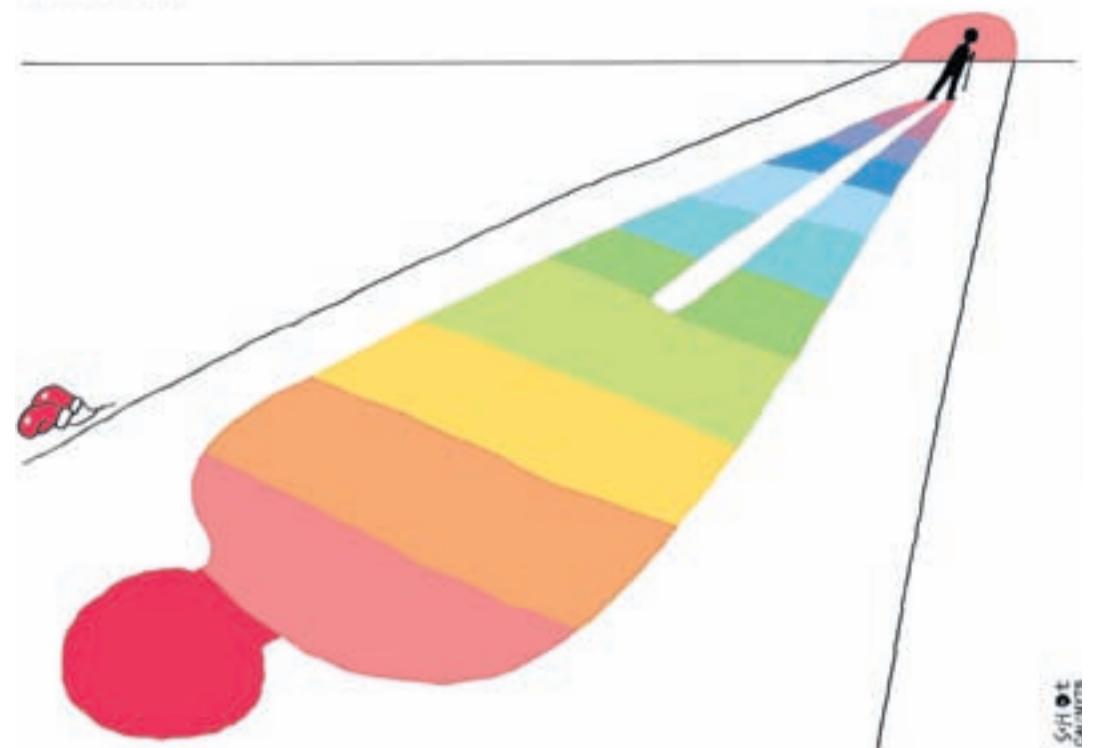
will only talk about tax cuts. Tax cuts alone won't cut it either. Our kids face three big adjustments. First, to be in the middle class, they will need to be constantly improving their skills over their lifetime. Second, to do that, they will need a lot more self-motivation. The "digital divide" will soon disappear. Fairly soon, virtually everyone will have a screen and an Internet connection. In that world, argues futurist Marina Gorbis, the big divide will be "the motivational divide" - who has the self-motivation, grit and persistence to take advantage of all the free or cheap online tools to create, collaborate and learn. And third, countries that thrive the most will be the HIEs - the high imagination-enabling countries - that attract and enable talent to be constantly spinning off new ideas and startups, the source of most new good jobs.

So now let's look at the latest PISA. It found that the most successful students are those who feel real "ownership" of their education. In all the best performing school systems, said Schleicher, "students feel they personally can make a difference in their own outcomes and that education will make a difference for their future." The PISA research, said Schleicher, also shows that "students whose parents have high expectations for them tend to have more perseverance, greater intrinsic motivation to learn."

The highest performing PISA schools, he added, all have "ownership" cultures - a high degree of professional autonomy for teachers in the classrooms, where teachers get to participate in shaping standards and curriculum and have ample time for continuous professional development. So teaching is not treated as an industry where teachers just spew out and implement the ideas of others, but rather is "a profession where teachers have ownership of their practice and standards, and hold each other accountable," said Schleicher.

We're going through a huge technological transformation in the middle of a recession. It requires a systemic response. Democrats who protect teachers' unions that block reforms to give teachers more ownership and accountability, and who refuse to address long-term entitlement spending that threatens to deprive us of funds to invest in the young, are harming our future. Republicans who block investments in things like early education and immigration reform - today we educate the world's top talent in our colleges and then send them back to their home countries - are harming our future.

Conservatives need to think differently about the near-term safety nets we need to ease some people through this period, and liberals need to think more seriously about how we incentivize and unleash risk-takers to start new companies that create growth, wealth and good jobs. To have more employees, we need more employers. Just redividing a slow-growing pie will not sustain the American dream. □



## Obamacare Finally Turning A Corner?



ROSS DOUTHAT  
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This was the week when liberals decided that it was safe to feel optimistic about Obamacare again.

Not, mind you, because the website's flaws have all been wiped away, or because the pace of enrollment is where the White House wanted it to be, or because the political backlash over plan cancellations has disappeared. The site may be better, the enrollment pace higher, the backlash no longer front-page news - but the law's rollout is by any reasonable definition still a dreadful mess.

But a worst-case scenario, in which the website remained unusable well into the new year, seems to have been averted, and with it the danger that insurers or congressional Democrats would begin to bail on Obamacare entirely.

And liberals have apparently decided that just getting things moving in the right direction makes all the difference. Sure, problems persist, crucial errors remain, and confusion probably looms for some customers and insurers in January, when policies are supposed to take effect. But errors can be fixed, money sliced around, more temporary changes made. The important thing is there will be no immediate political unraveling ... which means that enrollment will keep rising ... which means that by 2016, Obamacare will be a locked-in, impossible-to-repeal feature of the American landscape.

This holds true, liberals have begun telling themselves, even if the

law's disruptions cost Democrats dearly in the 2014 midterms. Because a working website will give the White House "three full years to create millions, and perhaps tens of millions, of winners who are getting insurance or protection," The Washington Post's Ezra Klein wrote last week, Democrats can "lose on the politics in the midterm election even as they win on the policy in the long term."

The entrenchment hypothesis is plausible. But it elides one crucial problem: the extent to which the successful implementation of Obamacare actually depends on the law's political standing.

That's because the law can work only if people who don't necessarily benefit immediately from its provisions decide to participate anyway. If they respond to higher premiums by either staying out or dropping out, then Obamacare will be permanently unstable: The dollar figures, both for insurers and the government, simply won't add up.

The participation of the young and healthy is supposed to be required, of course, by the individual mandate. But the mandate's penalty is relatively modest and its enforcement mechanisms relatively weak, which means its power ultimately depends more on civic duty than on immediate self-interest.

The law's advocates have explicitly acknowledged this point. Explaining the case for the mandate last month, The Atlantic's Matt O'Brien allowed that "a rational self-maximizer" might decide to pay the fine instead of buying costly coverage. But "real people," he argued, "aren't rational self-maximizers ... We don't like to feel like we're doing the wrong thing. We like to follow the rules instead. Feel like we're a good person."

The experience of Mitt Romney's Massachusetts, O'Brien concluded, shows how this works: Enrollment in Romneycare spiked when the mandate kicked in, and it spiked for healthy people - presumably because they accepted

the "positive responsibility" of the mandate, and bought health insurance because it's what they were "supposed to do."

But this example does not necessarily bode well for Obamacare's unfolding. The Massachusetts law was a bipartisan bill passed in a wealthy, homogeneous state with a pervasive left-liberal ethos. The national health care law aspires to create the same sense of "positive responsibility" in a much more polarized, fragmented, socioeconomically diverse and libertarian-minded society, roughly half of which opposes the law outright.

This was always going to be a lift even without technological problems and "if you like your plan, you can keep your plan" disillusionment. Now it's much, much heavier.

Consider the findings of a new poll from Harvard's Institute of Politics. Among the traditionally pro-Obama millennial generation, the core group that the White House needs to "follow the rules" and buy a policy, the president's approval ratings have dropped to 41 percent, and support for Obamacare has also plunged: 56 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds disapprove of the law, a majority say it will increase costs, and just 18 percent say it will improve their care. Meanwhile, a new National Journal survey finds that a majority of millennials expect the law to be repealed outright.

Those are not numbers that suggest a population that's poised to fall in line, do its civic duty, and feel warm and fuzzy in the process. Rather, they suggest that the political emotions stirred up by the rollout - frustration, disillusionment, anger - could have substantial consequences for sign-up rates as well.

"If there's one thing we know how to do," said a White House official last spring, projecting optimism about Obamacare enrollment, "it's reach young people."

Now, though, the fate of their policy may depend on not only reaching them, but reconverting them as well. □

# San Francisco Living: Beyond tie-dye, just techie

**SHEILA MARIKAR**

© 2013 New York Times

**SAN FRANCISCO** - A few weeks ago, Mike North ambled up the steps of his home in the Lower Haight neighborhood here, feeling blissed out.

Fresh from a 90-minute yoga class with live music and an instructor who had worn fishnet stockings and high heels, he was looking forward to a quiet, relaxing evening.

Instead, he opened the front door and was engulfed by an Enlightenment-era theme party.

people dressed up as Galileo and Newton than the latest episode of "Scandal."

North, the founder of the nonprofit organization Reallocate, lives in a three-story Victorian house known as the Embassy. Some nights, depending on the occupancy of a private guest room and a hostellike setup of bunk beds, as many as 16 people may sleep there.

Everyone shares a moderately sized kitchen (only rule: Don't leave dishes in the sink). There are eight

sion of communes, which are being flocked to by 20- and 30-somethings in the Bay Area, where shared living became popular in the 1960s. By the count of Schingler, who is starting an urban real estate development company focused on collaborative living, there are about 50 spaces similar to the Embassy officially operating in and around San Francisco. While each has its own quirks, they all aspire to foster creativity, fuel entrepreneurial endeavors and collaboration and make

place where you engage, create and collaborate." (Granted, he said, "you need a tolerance for organized chaos.")

Or as Nick Lane-Smith, 33, an entrepreneur and fixture at the Sub, a warehouse loft in the Mission District, put it: "You get to come home every day and it's like opening a cereal box with a toy inside. You have no idea who's going to be over and what they're going to be doing and who they brought with them that you get to meet."

Since Langton opened six

North was interviewed by 10 of 11 prospective housemates before being accepted into the Embassy. (At some communes, friends of residents looking for a place to crash can claim a bunk in a shared room for \$30-\$40 a night.) As powerful as the desire to socialize, perhaps, is the need to maximize resources in an unfriendly housing market.

"What we're doing is using a house with enormous square footage to house a decent number of people making normal human incomes," said Mike Grace, a biologist at the NASA Ames Research Center who lives in Rainbow Mansion, a 5,000-square-foot house in suburban Cupertino, about 40 miles from San Francisco, that has been communal since 2006.

Seven full-time residents now split the \$7,300 monthly rent there. "I capture the lifestyle of someone who earns \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year more than I do," Grace said. "For the rent that I pay, I would be living in a studio south of San Jose."

There seem to be more adult relationships at intentional communities than "Real World"-style hot tub hookups. Grace has lived in Rainbow for almost three years with his fiancée, Diana Gentry, who does research at NASA.

"I had never lived with a significant other before moving in here," Gentry said while making tofu lasagna for a house dinner on a recent Wednesday night. "That was the bigger change for me."

Schingler of the Embassy has lived in communal homes (including Rainbow, which she also helped found), for almost all her decade-long relationship with her husband, Robbie Schingler, 35, a founder of the satellite startup Planet Labs.

Then there is the reality of upkeep, which led to the demise of the Glint, a communal house founded by Damian Madray, Alexander Pagidas and Charles Lee in 2011. □



**The Embassy communal living space, which some nights, depending on the occupancy of a private guest room and a hostel-like setup of bunk beds, sleeps as many as 16, in the Lower Haight neighborhood of San Francisco. The Embassy is one of many "intentional communities" – a tech-savvy, not particularly politicized version of a commune flocked to by 20- and 30-somethings in the Bay Area, where shared living became popular in the 1960s.**

**(Preston Gannaway/The New York Times)**

"It was just full-on costumes, the plague was running rampant and there were doctors running around trying to cure it," North, 36, said recently. "There were people in monocles and full Edwardian garb. I stood there in my yoga clothes thinking, 'Quick, I need to get my tail coat and top hat, stat!'"

This is what happens when you have 11 roommates who would rather watch an argument between

bathrooms and a commercial-grade washing machine on the lower level. Ikea storage units mingle with velvet settees; garlic cloves come in 3-pound bags.

"You quickly learn to cook for more than just yourself," said Jessy Kate Schingler, 32, a founder of the Embassy.

The Embassy is one of many "intentional communities," a tech-savvy, not particularly politicized ver-

life generally more exciting. If this involves climbing up two ladders to sleep in a crawl space, as one resident at Langton Labs does, so be it.

"Some people think of home as a retreat, where you get to get away from everything," said Peretz Partensky, 32, a founder of Langton, which hosts an average of 19 people a night in two buildings across the street from each other. "We see home as a

years ago, Partensky estimates, about 1,000 short- and long-term guests have stayed there, each paying upward of \$1,200 a month in rent. Unlike in the old days, lost souls cannot saunter off a Volkswagen bus and expect a bed (and a toke); Langton, the Embassy and others have rigorous application processes for prospective residents, with questions such as: "If you had a superpower, what would it be?"